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UNDER THE OLD FLAG

JAMES HARRISON WILSON

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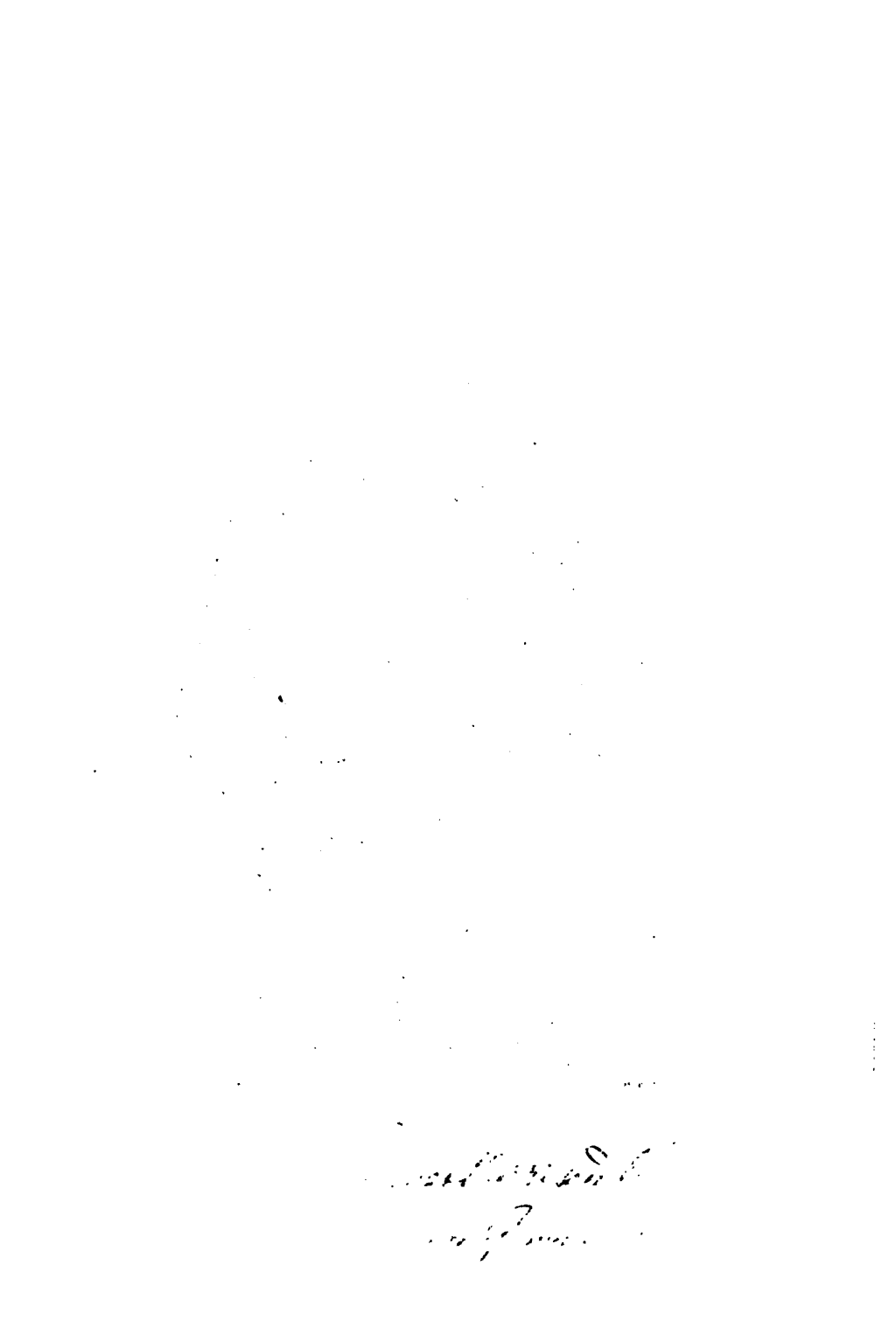
UNDER THE OLD FLAG

VOLUME I

James Harrison Wilson
Major General U. S. V.



UNDER THE OLD FLAG

RECOLLECTIONS OF MILITARY OPERATIONS IN THE WAR FOR THE UNION, THE SPANISH WAR THE BOXER REBELLION, ETC.

BY

JAMES HARRISON WILSON

BREVET MAJOR-GENERAL U. S. A.; LATE MAJOR-GENERAL U. S. V.
ENGINEER AND INSPECTOR-GENERAL ON GRANT'S STAFF
COMMANDER THIRD CAVALRY DIVISION, ARMY OF THE POTOMAC
COMMANDER CAVALRY CORPS M. D. M., ETC.

VOLUME I

NEW YORK AND LONDON
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
MCMXII

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Published October, 1912

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Printed in the United States of America

PREFACE

MILITARY SERVICES

June, 1855, to June, 1860	Cadet, United States Military Academy at West Point, five-year course.
July, 1860 to July, 1861	Brevet Second Lieutenant U. S. Topographical Engineers, Fort Vancouver, Washington Territory.
September to October, 1861	Recruiting Engineer Soldiers, Boston.
October, 1861 to July, 1862	Chief Topographical Engineer on the Staff of General T. W. Sherman, in the Port Royal Expedition; Siege and Capture of Fort Pulaski.
September to October, 1862	Volunteer Aid-de-camp and Assistant Engineer, on the Staff of General McClellan in the Antietam Campaign.
November, 1862 to January, 1863	First Lieutenant Topographical Engineers; Captain of Engineers; Chief Topographical Engineer and Assistant Chief Engineer in West Tennessee and Northern Mississippi, on the Staff of General Grant.

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January, 1863 to October, 1863	Lieutenant Colonel U. S. Volunteers; Assistant Inspector General, Department and Army of the Tennessee, in the Vicksburg Campaign, on the Staff of General Grant.
November, 1863 to February, 1864	Brigadier General U. S. Volunteers; Assistant Inspector General Military Division of the Mississippi, in the Chattanooga Campaign, on the Staff of General Grant.
February to May, 1864	Chief of Cavalry Bureau, War Department.
May to August, 1864	Brigadier General U. S. Volunteers, in command of the Third Cavalry Division Sheridan's Corps, Virginia Campaigns.
August to September, 1864	Commanding Third Cavalry Division, Sheridan's Valley Campaign.
October, 1864 to July, 1865	Brigadier General and Brevet Major General U. S. Volunteers; organized and commanded the Cavalry Corps Military Division of the Mississippi, in the Campaign against Hood in Middle Tennessee, and in the last Campaign of the War through Alabama and Georgia. Capture of Selma, Montgomery, Columbus, West Point and Macon. Pursuit and capture of Jefferson Davis; End of War.

April to July, 1866	Captain of Engineers on Defenses of Delaware River and Bay.
July, 1866 to December, 1870	Lieutenant Colonel 35th U. S. Infantry, on Engineer duty in connection with the Improvement of the Mississippi River and other western water-ways.
December, 1870	Honorably Discharged on the reduction of the Army, at his own request, December 31, 1870.
May, 1898 to April, 1899	Major General U. S. Volunteers, in the War with Spain. Assigned to command the 6th Army Corps, never organized; Volunteered and commanded the First Division First Army Corps in the expedition to Porto Rico; First Governor of the District of Ponce.
October, 1898 to January, 1899	Commanded First Army Corps in Kentucky and Georgia; also the Department of Matanzas and Santa Clara, in the first occupation of Cuba.
April, 1899 to July, 1900	At personal request of Secretary of War, after the reduction of the Army and the reëstablishment of Peace with Spain, accepted the reduced rank of Brigadier General U. S. Volunteers and remained in command of Department of Matanzas and Santa Clara.
July to November, 1900	Volunteered for service against Boxer Rebellion in China. Reported to Major General Chaffee in Peking as sec-

ond in command of the American Forces. As such had immediate command of the American Contingent with charge of the American quarter and the Southern entrance to the Forbidden City.

October, 1900 — Commanded the successful joint expedition of the American and British forces against Boxers at the Eight Temples. Held review of American Troops at Peking in presence of leading officers of the Treaty Powers.

December, 1900 — Returned to America. Declined further command or routine service.

March, 1901 — Placed on Retired List as Brigadier General U. S. Army (with Generals Fitzhugh Lee and Joseph Wheeler), in accordance with Special Act of Congress at the request of the President, March 2, 1901.

1902 — Represented the United States Army, accompanied by Lieutenant Colonel John Biddle of the Engineers and Lieutenant Colonel Henry D. Borup of the Ordnance, at the Coronation of King Edward VII.

Honorary Commissions

Brevet Major U. S. A., April 11, 1862, for gallant and meritorious services at the capture of Fort Pulaski, Ga.

Brevet Lieutenant Colonel, November 24, 1863, for gallant and meritorious services at the Battle of Chattanooga, Tenn.

Brevet Colonel, May 5, 1864, for gallant and meritorious services at the Battle of the Wilderness.

Brevet Major General U. S. Volunteers, October 5, 1864, for gallant and meritorious services during the Rebellion.

Brevet Brigadier General U. S. Army, March 13, 1865, for gallant and meritorious services at the Battle of Nashville, Tenn.

Brevet Major General U. S. Army, March 13, 1865, for gallant and meritorious services in the capture of Selma, Ala.

From the foregoing it will be seen that my modest career covered not only a great variety of military services, but three widely separated countries or theaters of operations, at most important and interesting epochs. They brought me in contact with leading officers at army headquarters, both at home and abroad, and thus gave me unusual opportunities for observing character and learning the inside details of what was taking place about me.

Holding, as I do, that history and historical recollections are valueless and had better not be written unless they tell the simple truth as nearly as it can be ascertained in regard to both men and events, I have given my story in the following pages as fully and frankly as my materials and memory would permit. But concealing nothing, I have set down naught in malice. Fortunately, in these modern days, our military men of rank, however much they may differ in personal characteristics or idiosyncrasies, are strictly honest, serious and devoted to duty. It gives me pleasure to add that I have never known one who was corrupt or wilfully negligent of his orders or opportunities or who was intentionally cruel or oppressive to those under his command or within his jurisdiction.

In the work I now give to the public, I have had the assistance of my brother, Colonel Bluford Wilson, of Springfield, Illinois, in a careful comparison, page by page with the Official Records, and with such contemporaneous writings and memoirs as were within reach and I am under great obligation to him for his vigilance and perspicacity.

JAMES HARRISON WILSON.

Wilmington, Delaware.
June 1, 1912.

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UNDER THE OLD FLAG

VOLUME I

INTRODUCTION

Family — Boyhood — West Point — Panama — Washington Territory — Return to the East.

My family name, Wilson, is of Anglo-Danish origin and is found wherever English-speaking people and their descendants are living. It belongs to the self-evoluting class and generally implies nothing closer than clanship. It has been known in the States from the earliest days.

My own forbears first settled in Tidewater, Virginia, whence they spread to Spottsylvania and Culpeper Counties, thence over the Blue Ridge into the valley regions, and finally to Kentucky and the alluring West. My father, Harrison Wilson, was the eldest son of Alexander Wilson and his wife, Elinor Harrison. He was born near Front Royal, Virginia, in 1789. His mother, through Thomas Harrison, was connected with the Harrisons of the James River country. She was famed for her courtly manners and amiable character.

Alexander Wilson's father was Isaac Wilson, for three years a sergeant in Captain Augustine Tabb's company of the Second Virginia state line, com-

manded by Colonel William Brent. His wife was Margaret Gordon, daughter of John Gordon and Barbara Cullom, evidently of Scotch origin.

My paternal ancestors, as far back as we can trace them, originating in and coming from Northumberland, part of ancient Bernicia, intermarried with the leading families of the Old Dominion and took an active part in all that concerned its growth and welfare. But, like many Virginians, Isaac Wilson with his brothers, sons, and nephews who were ruined by the War of Independence, wisely concluded that it would be easier to rebuild their homes and mend their fortunes in a new country than in the old, and consequently, as soon as they could manage it, after the Revolution, emigrated to Kentucky.

After settling with his family in the Blue Grass country near the present city of Lexington, Alexander Wilson and his brother Thornton went on to the Ohio River, where the former opened a considerable farm near a shipping point known as Raleigh, a few miles below the mouth of the Wabash.

Shortly afterward the general government owning the Illinois salines laid out Shawneetown on the Ohio River in the southeastern corner of the territory as the landing and entrepôt of the Salt Works. The place grew rapidly into the most important settlement of that region. My grandfather living nearby, naturally became one of the first settlers, and through his kinsman, General Harrison, then governor of the territory, received a grant of the ferry-right both ways across the Ohio, which, after his death in 1814, was confirmed to his heirs by the unanimous vote of the Illinois legislature. It came in due course, by inheritance and purchase, to my

brother and myself and after a hundred years is still operated under lease from us.

Alexander Wilson, evidently a notable citizen, was in 1812 elected a member of the first American legislature ever convened in Illinois, and as chairman of several of its principal committees exercised a controlling influence not only in selecting, framing, and passing laws for the new territory, but in providing for its defence against the British emissaries and their savage allies. Shortly after the session of 1813 my grandfather died, but my father, instead of leaving his body in a French graveyard at Kaskaskia, removed it to Shawneetown, and, as was the custom, buried it on the paternal farm in Kentucky.

Harrison Wilson was at that time just reaching man's estate. Although quite a lad when his family left Virginia, he remembered but little of it except that he had been taken to Alexandria by his father to call on General Washington, and that the general had kindly patted him on the head while making a neighborly inquiry as to his mother's health.

My father, of course, shared the travels and hardships of his family, with but little time and less opportunity for education beyond that given by his mother and father. He had a few terms from the peripatetic schoolmaster of the settlements, and, being intelligent and fond of reading, although books were scarce and newspapers unknown on the frontier, became a man of more than average attainments.

At the outbreak of the second war with Great Britain, Harrison Wilson was commissioned ensign September 17, 1812, in Captain Thomas E. Craig's company of Frontier Riflemen, and took part in an expedition of two keel boats by the Illinois River to

Fort Crève-Cœur, near the present city of Peoria, for the purpose of breaking up the liquor traffic and overawing the Indian allies of the British. The boats were armed with swivels and blunderbusses and were impenetrable to rifle bullets. The expedition, lasting four months, was so successful that Captain Craig was promoted to major of the Fourth Territorial Regiment, while my father, although only twenty-two, was made captain April 17, 1813, to fill the vacancy. Although no part of the regiment was again called into service, he continued his connection with it, and after the establishment of peace became its colonel.

Although a farmer, stock-raiser, and trader to New Orleans, my father was elected county treasurer and sheriff in turn and led a busy and active life till the Black Hawk War took him again into the army as captain of Illinois Mounted Volunteers, first regiment, first brigade. His company, containing many of the leading citizens of Gallatin County, was mustered into the service May 15, and discharged August 12, 1832.

During the brief campaign which followed, my father made the acquaintance of Winfield Scott, Zachary Taylor, Jefferson Davis, Albert Sidney Johnston, and Joseph E. Johnston, all of whom were serving at that time in Illinois as officers of the regular army. He also met Captain Abraham Lincoln and the leading officers of the territorial forces.

After this campaign, the last against the Indians east of the Mississippi, my father settled down and led an uneventful life to the end. On the outbreak of the Mexican War, he offered a regiment of volunteers from the lower counties of the state, but as

only six were needed, his offer was declined with the assurance of the governor that if another were required his regiment should be taken.

The decade after the Mexican War was a turbulent one in southeastern Illinois. The closing of the salt works had let loose a large number of rough operatives, white and black. Gambling, drinking, horse-racing, and gun-fighting prevailed, the slavery question came to the front as it had done once before, and kidnapping became common along the border of the slave states. Among the first victims was a colored girl who had belonged to the Wilson family. She was taken to New Orleans and sold to a planter on the Red River, but as soon as she could be located my father went for her, and, after much legal formality and trouble, brought her home in triumph. After a similar service in another case of the same sort, which aroused the public conscience, under his leadership, he had the satisfaction of seeing all forms of violence vindicated and the rowdies and kidnappers brought to punishment or driven out of the state.

But my father's career was drawing to a close. Although a man of extraordinary activity and endurance, he fell sick, and, after a lingering illness, died February 9, 1852, at the age of 63. He was always independent in politics and never forgot that he was a Virginian. He was twice married. His first wife was a daughter of Andrew Waggoner, a Virginian, who had settled in Union County, Kentucky. She died early, leaving one son, John Andrew, who removed to Hamilton County, where he became sheriff, a member of the legislature, and a leading merchant. He had several children, the old-

est of whom, John Harrison, became a highly successful contractor, and is now one of the wealthiest and most highly respected citizens of the county.

Harrison Wilson's second wife, Katharine Schneyder, was my mother. She was the daughter of Augustus Schneyder, an ex-soldier of the Napoleonic wars and mayor of Gambsheim, in Rhenish Alsace, near Strasburg. He was a manufacturer and a thoughtful man who, seeing the unsettled conditions at home and the coming greatness of the United States, emigrated, as was then the custom, with his wife, Louisa Studer, and several children, landing at Philadelphia in 1818. Thence he made his way to Pittsburg by wagon and down the Ohio by houseboat to New Harmony, Indiana, the idealist settlement of the Rappites. Here he remained several years, but on the death of his wife he removed with his family to Shawneetown, forty miles to the southwest, where my father made their acquaintance and married the eldest daughter, my mother. But, drawn by the superior attractions of the lead mine region in the northwestern corner of the state, my grandfather made his way to Galena, where, after some years of mining, he settled down on a farm near that of the Rawlins family, whose eldest son long years afterward became my intimate friend and associate on General Grant's staff and finally chief-of-staff of the army and secretary of war.

My father and mother had three daughters and four sons. One daughter and three sons grew up and took part according to their opportunities in the affairs of our times.

I was born at the home farm September 2, 1837, about two miles and a half from Shawneetown,

where I went through the town schools kept by a series of worthy masters till I was fifteen. After a few months in a general store and a year with my uncle, Orval Pool, the principal produce merchant of the region, I saved money enough to pay for further education for something less than a year. I entered McKendree College, St. Clair County, as a freshman and passed the winter of 1854-5 in preparing myself for West Point.

Through the endorsement of Major Samuel K. Casey, Captain John M. Cunningham (whose eldest daughter became Mrs. John A. Logan), the Honorable Willis Allen, outgoing member of Congress, and of the Honorable Samuel S. Marshall, his successor, all of whom were my warm personal friends, I secured my appointment to West Point, where, after an interesting trip by the way of Washington, Philadelphia and New York, I reported for duty on June 5, 1855.

My class was the first ever appointed to pursue the five years' course ordered by Jefferson Davis, then secretary of war, and the first and only one, except the younger part of the class ahead of us, that ever completed that course. We were a hundred and twenty-one in all, but nineteen or twenty were rejected as deficient in one or another of the modest requirements of the day. During the five years which followed the exactions were severe and the standard high, so that some sixty more fell by the wayside, leaving forty-one, or only one-third of the original number to graduate.

Personally, I had nothing to complain of. I enjoyed the novelty of my first encampment. It was fresh, invigorating, and at times exciting, but from

the first it was hard work during the day, with continual vigilance and resistance during the night. Hazing was practiced in full force. It was good-natured, but at times rather rough play between old and new cadets, which, so far as I could see, did no harm but much good to all. It sharpened our observation, stimulated our vigilance and excited our curiosity. It may have discouraged the home-sick and weak-hearted, but it certainly did no injury whatever to such as met it with good-natured resistance and were fit for the life they had chosen. It brought me but one adventure which, fortunately, ended to my advantage. Two older cadets, Lockett of Alabama and Nicodemus of Maryland, called on me one hot afternoon in July and most courteously invited me to go swimming with them. As it was the first civility of the kind I had received, and as I had begun to long for a plunge in the stately Hudson, I eagerly accepted, and in a few minutes we were at Gee's Point. After a question or two about the depth of the water and the best place to go in and come out, I jumped in head first and had hardly got my nose above the water when my friends were close upon me. A glance revealed the fact that they were aiming to duck me, but, selecting the weaker swimmer, I made for him, and, separating him from the other, placed my hands on his head and pushed him under. As he went down I gave him an extra shove with both feet toward the bottom. The other was after me instantly, but, as soon as I thought it safe, I slackened speed and allowed him to close up, when I delivered him a sharp, "stern-wheel" kick on the nose, which brought the blood and ended the engagement. My antagonists

were both genuine sportsmen, and, instead of losing their temper, took my resistance good naturedly. They were somewhat surprised, however, to learn that a raw plebe could swim, but when I explained that I was brought up on the Ohio River, not only did they conclude I would do, but we became fast friends and swimming companions for the rest of the season.

Our class was composed of the usual assortment of young men from both north and south. We had the nephew of a president and the son of a governor, and the planters, farmers, lawyers, doctor, preachers, merchants, and even mechanics, were all represented. It was a pure democracy in which all were equal, and nothing counted but character and brains. The January examinations weeded out a good many, but by the end of the year those likely to graduate had become pretty well known, and they had taken on the air and bearing of seasoned cadets, which in ranks made them look as much like each other as pins in a paper.

At the end of the year, although I had started next to foot, I was in the first or second section in all the studies. My two terms at college had been of great advantage in teaching me how to study. I had no difficulty in any branch, and did my daily task easily enough, and, after a few months, had plenty of time left for general reading. This was the case to the end of my cadet life. The library contained some twenty thousand volumes, largely military, but all fairly well selected, and, although nothing was done to encourage its use, or to guide the cadets in the selection of books, it was free to all who had time or inclination to visit it after study

hours or on holidays. I soon made the acquaintance of Fries, the curator. During my first encampment I read Story's "Constitutional Law" and a general assortment of romance and history, and after that not only became a steady patron of it, but close friends with the kindly Fries, who had a wonderful memory, and was most helpful in introducing me to his treasures. As I grew older he became more considerate, and I hold him in grateful memory for his unfailing kindness. The instructors came and went, but he remained at his post, not only for my term, but for long years afterward, and if I should be called upon to say who did me the most good and helped me most to equip myself for the duties of life, I should unhesitatingly say André Fries, the old librarian.

At the end of my first year, all unconscious of having made any special progress, I was more greatly surprised and gratified than I ever was at any subsequent promotion when my name was read out at the head of the list of lance-corporals to receive and break in the new candidates for admission. As this was followed by my appointment as first corporal, and later as acting first sergeant of "A" Company, and finally as the first sergeant of "B" Company, I became quite military as well as a "stern man" on duty.

I was thus a cadet non-commissioned officer in good standing for the better part of two years, but my career as such was cut short by an untoward incident for which I was not altogether culpable. My clerk, whose duty it was to keep the roster, made out the guard details, and put the daily list under my gunsight, unfortunately regarding it beneath the

dignity of a first class man to perform sentry duty, and, in accordance with custom, omitted the names of all first class men from the details. The omission was soon discovered, but, compromising with my sense of duty, I refrained from putting an end to it till it was too late. By some means, never explained, my company commander, Lieutenant McCook, afterward a distinguished major general and an army corps commander, discovered it and haled me with the other first sergeants before the commandant of cadets. The latter made short work of it as a clear case of gross neglect of duty, and, as it could neither be denied nor explained, he sent us all to our quarters in arrest. In a short time the superintendent reduced us to the ranks and sentenced each to perform ten extra tours of camp guard duty and to be confined to the limits of the camp till the punishment was completed.

During my stay at West Point I naturally became expert in the exercises and tactics of the various arms and, both as a corporal and sergeant, felt that I was as good a drill master as could be found. At West Point as well as elsewhere it is the pride of every non-commissioned officer to make his squad as nearly perfect as possible, and with the best men it is remarkable how rapidly they progress, and how soon they become skillful in every military practice.

Having in later life seen many of the crack regiments of Europe and Asia, I entertain no doubt whatever that the corps of cadets at West Point, all things considered, is the best battalion of infantry in the world. For most of my time Colonel Hardee, the author of the tactics, afterward a Confederate

lieutenant-general, was commandant, and with his rigid instruction the corps became almost perfect in bearing, discipline, and drill. Under his searching eye no slouchy man escaped. I can hear now his clarion voice, with its slightly Southern accent, sing out: "Attention, battalion! Hold up your head, Mr. Sweet, you'll never make a soldier in your life!"[1] And then would follow the command with which the drill began. But Hardee was not satisfied to let the battalion go with his instruction. No one knew better than he that perfection in the school of the soldier and squad is necessary to perfection in the school of the company and battalion, and consequently he was always on the drill ground when the new cadets were being broken in.

I have a distinct recollection of an awkward incident under his eye which brought an unexpected laugh upon me. As we were approaching the end of our second encampment, I was putting my best squad of twelve men through inspection of arms in my severest manner. Hardee was looking on as I thought with approval. Everything went well and to my entire satisfaction till I stepped in front of the squad preparatory to closing ranks. I had noticed a pile of cobble-stones nearby, but, as I started to walk backward for the purpose of taking in the whole squad at a glance, I felt the stones under my heels, and almost instantly they began to roll. My feet became entangled and, losing my balance, I fell completely over backward. Of course, the exhibition I made was more than the squad could stand. Every

[1] In fact, he became one of the most gallant men of his day, and was killed while leading a squadron headon at Gaines' Mill against Jackson's Corps.

man of them, and especially Cadet McKenzie,[1] broke out in an audible laugh. Hardee himself failed to keep his face straight, and this made the situation all the more embarrassing. But I always thought I proved myself equal to the occasion. Springing to my feet at once, I sang out: "Close ranks, march! Fours, left! Forward, double quick, march!" And off we went around the plain without halting. By the time we had made one turn the breathing became heavy, but, as it seemed to me there was still enough breath left for another laugh, I continued the double-quick till we got around a second time, when I halted the squad and gave the command: "Order arms—in place, rest!" It is notable that although we had covered something like a mile and a half at full speed, no one had fallen out, but all were so nearly exhausted that when I asked quite informally, as I did, if they thought they could witness such another accident without laughing they were unanimous in saying they thought they could. This, of course, closed the incident, though the commandant intimated later that he thought the punishment somewhat too great for the offense. In this he was probably right, but it is interesting to note that as long as I remained first sergeant of that company I had perfect order in ranks.

Those were great days, and, while the drilling and studying were intermingled with dancing, fencing, riding, and gymnastics, time passed rapidly and agreeably, with marked improvement to both body and mind. When we graduated there was not an infirm or unsound man in the class, but, on the con-

[1] Afterwards a distinguished brigadier and major general of cavalry.

trary, there were many who would have passed anywhere as athletes of no mean quality, although the period of football and baseball was yet in the future. The entire course was admirably arranged to combine physical with mental development, and in this connection I give it as my deliberate opinion, after many years of observation, that the national schools at West Point and Annapolis are the best of their kind in the world. They get all there is to be had out of the cadets, and ruthlessly send away those who cannot reach the required standard of efficiency. There is no idling, no lost time, and no favoritism, and the result is altogether admirable.

Having been accustomed to horses from childhood, I became a good theoretical, as well as practical horseman. It was my lot to be put in charge of vicious mounts, more than one of which fell over backward or ran away with me, but, fortunately, without doing me any harm. It was due solely to this fact, as well as to the manner in which I managed my own horses in the field, that I was assigned to the command of cavalry after I reached the grade of brigadier general, through two and a half years' service in the engineering and inspecting departments.

Looking back on my military life, I have only two regrets in connection with it: first, that I was never an enlisted man in the infantry or cavalry, because, with my health, activity, powers of endurance, and skill in handling a rifle and a horse, I always felt that I would have been as good a soldier as could be found anywhere in the ranks, while I was far from having the same confidence in my capacity as a commissioned officer; and, second, that

I was never a prisoner of war, because I felt that the privation and ill treatment of that fate would have stimulated me to even greater determination and services in behalf of the Union cause.

My last summer, like all the rest, was a busy one, for, in order to get rid of my confinement, as well as the extra guard duty to which I had been sentenced, I was allowed the privilege of walking my regular and extra tours consecutively, and thus for twelve days without intermission I was constantly on guard, walking two hours and resting four, both day and night, till I had paid the penalty and wiped out the score against me.

In addition to performing all regular duties, I was up to everything within limits and to an occasional trip off limits in those days. At the "Eagle Valley Retreat" fried chicken and buckwheat cakes were most attractively served by the landlord's eldest daughter, and cakes always kept coming till one of our number, a handsome Virginian, would stop them by a graceful wave of the hand and "sufficient of the buckwheats, Sarie." Fortunately, these escapades, during which I swam the river more than once to the trestle work above Garrisons and back to the Point, were undetected and therefore unpunished.

My aggregate recorded demerits amounted to something like one hundred and seventy for the five years of my cadet life, and, as conduct counts along with studies and duties in making up class standing, I paid the penalty in the end by graduating only sixth in the class, when, if I had been a "good boy," I might have done one or two files better. But, as General Grant used to say: "We had a power of

fun in those days," and I do not see even now how closer attention to studies or a closer observance of regulations could have materially improved either my education or my happiness.

My class, after having been sifted to the irreducible minimum of forty-one, was generally considered a good one. It certainly had several admirable scholars in it, notably McFarland, Bowen and Tardy, besides quite a number who rose to high rank and distinction, among whom were Porter, Merritt, Pennington, Hall, Jones, Randol, Martin, Marsh, Warner, and John M. Wilson.

Although most of our number were disappointed at not graduating in four years, as was at one time ordered, instead of staying five, as originally intended, it is not to be denied that the extra year was well and profitably employed, and in the end gave us an unusually good preparation for the great war which broke out within a year after we graduated. I was not disappointed, for I felt that our last year would round out our education and put us on higher ground than our predecessors had generally attained.

The professors and instructors of the day were able and conscientious men. Mahan, Church, Bartlett, and Kendrick had already become famous, and our superintendent, military staff, and daily instructors were mostly officers of rare ability. Among the number were Delafield, Duane, W. F. Smith, Casey, Craighill, and Weitzel, of the engineers; Benton and Howard of the ordnance; Hardee, Field, Williams, and Cosby of the cavalry; Silvey, Sill, Holabird, Fry, Perry, and Gibbon of the artillery; Walker, Clitz, Cogswell, Washington, Wilcox, Mc-

Cook, and many others of the infantry. They had all seen service and were studious, hard-working, and dignified officers, who seemed to take as much pride in studying for their own information as for the instruction of the cadets. It is gratifying to note that several of the number rose afterward to high command and great distinction.

In these later days of the War College and the special schools for the staff and line of the army, four years with the present standard, or even three years with a higher standard for admission, constitute an ample term for West Point; but without these post-graduate schools, which did not exist in our time, five years were none too many. At all events, I valued them and the advantages they brought highly at the time, and since then I have always thought they gave us a broader view and a better preparation for the military profession than we could possibly have got in any other way. It is doubtless due to this fact that several of our number rose to high command by the time the conflict between the states was hardly half over. At its outset they entered the field with as much, if not more, theoretical knowledge of the art and science of war than most of their seniors, and after a comparatively short experience on the staff or with troops they were quite as well qualified in every way, except by age, for responsibility and high command. Porter, who served with marked distinction on the staff of McClellan, Rosecrans, and Grant; Bowen, who served with W. F. Smith and Parke; Martin of the infantry and the cavalry bureau and afterward of the Adjutant General's Department, and Edson of the Ordnance, were certainly able offi-

cers without reference to age. Merritt was one of the best and most successful cavalry commanders on either side. Whittemore, who served constantly and creditably as an ordnance officer, had but little chance for distinction. Randol, Pennington, and John M. Wilson became splendid battery commanders, the first and second as chiefs of artillery. As if to illustrate the completeness of the West Point education for all branches of the service, Pennington later commanded a regiment and finally a brigade of cavalry under Sheridan with great success, while J. M. Wilson was shortly afterward transferred to the engineers, and after a long and honorable career, was retired for age as the chief of that distinguished corps. It may be truthfully said that no better officers ever rose to the command of a company or a regiment of infantry, whether regular or volunteer, than William G. Jones, Robert H. Hall, John N. Andrews, Salem S. Marsh, James P. Martin, and James M. Warner. They were *preux chevaliers,* as modest as girls, and by choice constantly with the colors, working hard and "hoping that they might find honor there." By skill, courage, and success in many battles and campaigns they added luster to our arms, and may well be regarded by those they have left behind as model soldiers and gentlemen of faultless record. Among those destined for less brilliant careers were Kellogg, who commanded a volunteer cavalry regiment and, becoming physically disqualified, had to retire, and Foster, who commanded a regiment of Missouri infantry and died from sickness contracted in service. There was Sweet, as brave as any knight, who lay down his young life at Gaines' Mill while leading

a squadron of regular cavalry headlong to the charge against Stonewall Jackson's army corps. There were Tardy, the scholar, and Vanderbilt, the athlete, who fell sick and died in the earlier days of the war. They were preceded by the frail but heroic Mishler, who was killed with a shout of defiance on his lips while defending his guns against a charge at Val Verde. There was Powell, a favorite staff officer of McPherson, who served gallantly through the war and died on the plains from an accident. And there were Hopkins, Bowman, Cushing, Lynn, and Jordan, who served with the regulars or on detached duty, but for one reason or another failed to win the fame they had dreamed of. Lewis, short and stout, but the strongest and most agile man of the class, died from sickness in the field. We also had our Smith, Alfred T., with a splendid double-bass voice, who went through both the Civil War and the war against the Filipinos, and after a long and conscientious life always with the colors, retired by reason of advanced age as a colonel.

Then, too, like all the other classes of the period, we had our Southerners—hot-headed, masterful, intolerant fellows who classed Black Republicans with the abolitionists, and believed in slavery as a divine institution. Benjamin Sloan, of South Carolina, was by far the ablest of the lot. As a boy it was said he left "F" out of his name because Benjamin Franklin was a Northerner. He served the South through to the end and then became a respected college president in his native state. Ramseur, of Huguenot origin, from North Carolina, was as handsome and attractive a young man as could be found. He came to be looked upon

by the Confederate leaders as almost without a peer as an infantry commander and early rose to the rank of major general. He was mortally wounded in the battle of Cedar Creek and was tenderly nursed in his dying hours by classmates and friends whom he had known at West Point. Kerr, a man of intellect and courage, also from the old North state, died young without rising to distinction. Gibbes, of South Carolina, who fought Upton unsuccessfully as a cadet because he was an abolitionist, fired the first gun at Sumter and saw the last one fired at Appomattox. Huger, of the same state, with a long line of distinguished ancestors, was far from being a disunionist, but he cast his lot with "his people," and after serving them as a staff officer became a successful railroad man and lived beyond three score years. McCreery, a brilliant and ambitious Virginian, was killed at Antietam. He had provoked me, unfortunately for himself, into the only fight I had in my cadet days, ostensibly because of impatient words I had used toward him at artillery drill, but really because I was a Northerner, and he and his friends thought a licking would do me good. Gibbes was his second and Hall was mine. The fight was with bare fists, "rough and tumble" to a finish without a break, according to the local rules. It came off after supper within the hallowed precincts of old Fort Clinton of Revolutionary memory. It was short, sharp, and decisive. But the hardest case of all was that of Riley, one of the handsomest, most engaging, and most popular men of the class. He was the son of General Bennett Riley of the regular army, a noted hero of the Mexican War, originally

from western New York. The youngster, on graduating, was sent to the extreme West, where he served with Earl Van Dorn and other Southern officers, and through some strange fatuity or some fatal friendship he cast his lot with the South and lost as bravely as the best with the comrades and the cause for which he stood.

The man who graduated at the foot of the class was Borland, of Arkansas, the son of a senator of that name. He was a good fellow and a great favorite and had taken seven years to master the course. By reasoning altogether his own, although as poor as Job's turkey, he conceived that "his rights in the territories" might be withheld by a Republican administration, and so he, too, went to fight for the South. A life of obscure employments, followed by an old age of suffering and penury, are his lot among the people he served so faithfully.

Last, but not least, was the grave and austere McFarland, the brightest of them all, who graduated easily head of the class, and from music to quaternions never encountered an art or a science he did not master. With the mind of a Laplace and the skill of a Vauban, he was fitted for any place that fortune might bring, and should have left his mark deeply impressed upon the times in which he lived. But fortune was against him from the first, and his superb equipment as a soldier and scientist was his undoing. It brought him the duty of constructing permanent fortifications and sea-coast defences, which were to assist in making good the blockade and cutting off outside help, without which it was impossible for the Confederacy to succeed. This important but modest service kept him generally far

from the march of contending armies and from the excitement and danger of battle, and thus it continued, not only for the greater part of the war, but until middle life. He died from rheumatism of the heart. He was loved and honored by all, but his hopes had been disappointed and his "white, unstained soldier's plume," with all its inspirations, remained to the end but a dream and a disappointment.

I have always felt that the decade at the end of which my class graduated was the golden age of West Point. This may be because I knew it better than I have ever known it since, but in those days it was eminently the place of "the square deal." Neither outside pull nor inside intrigue could influence the standing of any man nor change the course of the academic board so much as a hair's breadth. The officers of all grades were the selected men of the army. None but an engineer of the highest rank and attainments had up to that time ever held the position of superintendent, and the discipline was perfect. There was now and then a little harmless hazing and occasionally some that was far too rough, but it was either judiciously ignored or firmly and effectively dealt with by the superintendent without advertising the matter or calling on the War Department for assistance. The fact is that such a call would have been considered as an evidence of incapacity and weakness by an officer of Colonel Delafield's experience and character.

During my time at the Academy and afterward till the first gun of the war was fired, politics ran high. We were boys, but, coming from every Congressional district of the Union, the corps of cadets

was as much a representative body as Congress itself. We all read the newspapers, not only from New York, but from home towns, and all took sides. I was a Douglas Democrat, possibly as much by reason of my Southern ancestry as because "the Little Giant" was from my state and because in debates with his opponents, and especially with Jefferson Davis, he proudly proclaimed that he would neither ask nor grant quarter. My section of the state was always strongly Democratic and it was devoted to Douglas. My own county, Gallatin, gave Mr. Lincoln only sixty-five votes for president and Mr. Douglas all the rest. His doctrine of popular sovereignty seemed to be not only plausible, but consistent with the right of self-government which lay at the base of the American system. I was familiar with the Constitution and its commentaries as taught in our course of law, but I did not perceive that the District of Columbia and the territories were not sovereignties at all, but were under the absolute control of Congress. I was opposed to slavery itself, but I realized that it was under the protection of the law and beyond the power of Congress to regulate or abolish it. I believed in the patriotism of Douglas and in his steadfast devotion to the Union.

It has always seemed to me that Lincoln's biographers, Nicolay and Hay, often went out of their way to belittle Douglas in order to exalt their great Chief, and that this really served to depreciate Lincoln. "Arts of the demagogue," "vicious methods," "quibbling," "success above principle," "plausible but delusive," are among the unkind phrases applied to Douglas in reviewing the points of contact between these two really great men. But Lincoln's

biographers were not always unkind. Indeed, they concede Douglas' great ability, and at times laud him highly, but generally leave the impression that he was actuated by motives less lofty, and that he moved on a moral plane distinctly lower than Lincoln's. They seem to have overlooked the fact that in all the arts of the mere politician their wily Chief had served a full apprenticeship in the trade and that he could easily give Mr. Douglas large odds and beat him at the game. They pass over the great and inestimable service rendered by Douglas to the cause of the Union in his last days with slight or inadequate mention, and make no quotations from his two masterly and decisive speeches following his last personal conference with Lincoln in Washington April 14, 1861. It is hardly too much to say of those speeches that they were decisive of a unified North in "the impending conflict," and that they constituted beyond comparison the greatest individual service rendered to the Union by any public man, not even excepting Mr. Lincoln's, in the crucial days following the attack on Fort Sumter. In their far-reaching results they have rarely been equaled and never surpassed by any forensic effort of ancient or modern times.

At Springfield, April 25, 1861, before a joint session of the two houses of the legislature, over which the now venerable Shelby M. Cullom presided, Douglas, in the greatest speech of his life, aroused his large audience to a frenzy of patriotic enthusiasm when at the height of his eloquent appeal for the Union he said:

"When hostile armies are marching under new and odious banners against the government

of our Country, the shortest way to peace is the most stupendous and unanimous preparation for war."

Of this speech Senator Cullom has since said: "Never in all my experience in public life, before or since, have I been so impressed by a speaker." Another says: "His eloquence, his earnestness and power were such as to fairly transfigure him," while men and women were carried off their feet in an hysterical wave of patriotism. Later, at Chicago, in June, a few days before his death, in the last effort of his life, arousing the wildest enthusiasm of a vast audience and throughout the whole North, he said:

"There are only two sides to the question. Every man must be for the United States or against it. There can be no neutrals in this war—ONLY PATRIOTS and TRAITORS."[1]

Of this Horace White says: "That speech hushed the breath of treason in every corner of the State."[2] And he might have added with equal truthfulness that it swept away for the time all party lines, unified the whole North and brought to the unwavering support of Lincoln and the Union cause the millions of devoted, loyal, and enthusiastic personal and party friends of the Senator they fondly called "The Little Giant."

It is but tardy justice to call particular attention to the fact that his manly and patriotic course brought Logan, McClernand, Ogleby, Palmer, Hurlbut, Lawler, and many other influential Douglas Democrats from Illinois into the army as generals

[1] Chicago Wigwam Speech, *New York Tribune*, June 13, 1861.

[2] "Life of Lincoln," Herndon & Weik, Vol. II, pp. 126-7.

and colonels. In the light of all this it can be truly said that Douglas was one of the strongest and most influential characters in all the galaxy of American statesmen. That Lincoln recognized his great services is shown by the fact that he offered him the commission of major general of Volunteers. A month afterward, at the age of forty-eight, he was in his grave.

Since the above was written the attention of the venerable William Jayne, of Springfield, Illinois, has been called to the subject. He was Lincoln's special friend, he stood up with him at his wedding, and was appointed by him governor of Dakota. He has always been a staunch Republican. He is one of the few surviving close friends of Lincoln, hale and hearty at eighty-five years of age, and does not hesitate to say: "There would have been war in Illinois but for Douglas. Justice has never been done to his memory. He was a very great man and a true patriot."

In my day the teaching of the Academy was clear and unequivocal on this point: that whatever might be the reserved rights of the state or of its citizens, those who had taken the oath of allegiance to the Union and bound themselves to faithful service in the army had no reserved rights, and that no matter what a mere citizen might think or do, we were solemnly pledged to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States "against all its enemies and opposers whatsoever." We were told that these words included domestic as well as foreign enemies, and that so long as two states held together under the Constitution and the laws enacted in accordance therewith, it was the duty of all regular officers to

uphold the flag and stand by the government of the United States.

At all events, this was my platform, and I am glad to say most of the Northern men stood with me on it. But my Southern classmates, almost to a man, in spite of their oath of allegiance, were against it and believed in state rights, and when the test came all went South, except Martin, of Kentucky. He was but a boy with a man's head on his shoulders, and never thereafter in any official emergency failed in his duty. We had plenty of Free-soilers, and a few Abolitionists, and when at leisure we had fierce discussions in spite of ourselves. While the political lines were closely drawn, friendly relations were maintained, but the closest intimacies were sectional rather than national. We had our differences and our fights, but they, as well as the feelings which existed, have been so fully and so admirably portrayed by other writers that nothing further need be said here.[1]

The representative character of the Military Academy, while obvious enough when attention is directed to it, has never been adequately set forth by the officers controlling the institution nor fully understood by the cadets themselves. Although it is absolutely national and, properly enough, nowadays makes known to its graduates the paramount claims of the nation upon their allegiance and service by commissioned officers of the army, nothing whatever is said as to their relations with the civil officials and their people at home, nor the advantages of maintaining close connection with them.

[1] "The Spirit of Old West Point," by General Morris Schaff, 1907.

As pointed out in the case of my own class, the cadets are drawn from every rank and station of life absolutely without reference to "race, color or previous condition of servitude." Every man's son is eligible for appointment if he has the proper qualifications, and, when admitted, every man's son has an equal chance with every other man's son. I shall not deny that here and there at rare intervals young men present themselves who, by disagreeable or offensive appearance, manners, or behavior, arouse the antagonism of their associates, or even of those in authority over them. If they prove obdurate, intractable, or vicious, they are finally eliminated, although they might possibly, with patient encouragement and assistance, master the course of studies; but I cannot recall a case where real injustice was done. Human nature is a complex adjustment of contradictory and opposing elements in which absolute justice can neither be defined nor secured. Honorable men do the best they can and leave the consequences to take care of themselves.

In the case of the cadets, the fashioning hands of discipline, instruction, and environment begin their work at once, and by the end of the year, as I have previously remarked, as far as an outsider can perceive, they all look alike, and in ranks as much so as a row of pins. But the training and assimilation do not end there. They go on to the end. When the young men at the close of their second year go home on furlough, clad in a smart uniform, they are received with pride and satisfaction by their family and friends, and they are the envy of their old schoolmates and the admiration of the girls. They are proud and happy to a degree that

no one who has not been through the experience can realize. They find everything agreeable and have altogether the best time they ever had. When they return to the Academy and buckle down again to their work they broaden in their minds and in their ambitions, and begin to wonder how they are coming out, what branch of service they will enter, and what will be their chance for glory. The change in person, in bearing, and in ideals goes on and they become grown men; they have mastered the course, made their way to an assured position, and are about to enter into the real race of life. They graduate, choose their corps and regiment, and go home again to their family and friends. Of course, those who come from the higher walks of life find a welcome in society, and now and then one looks around and marries the girl he loved as a boy, or his sister's friend. But the great majority find themselves in an environment different from that in which they grew up. Their people and friends may be just as proud, or even prouder, of them than when they were at home on furlough, but the new graduate somehow or another may not be so proud of them as he once was. He has changed, but the plain people have not, and there is an incongruity, if not an inharmony, that makes him uneasy. And so when his leave is at an end he goes away—it used to be to the frontier, but now it is to the Philippines, or to a dull post on the sea coast. He enters upon his duty as an officer and soon becomes so much absorbed in making a record for himself, upon which he proudly imagines his whole future is to depend, that he thinks less and less frequently of his boyhood home, family, and friends Unfortu-

nately, even if otherwise disposed, he returns but seldom, and while he thinks of them occasionally, he finally forgets them, little by little to be sure, but when his father and mother die the strongest tie is broken and he loses his citizenship at home, and becomes a citizen of the country at large. He has lost his constituents and his backing and now has no chance for assistance in life except from friends he makes in the army or in the neighborhood of the posts at which he has served.

If he realizes this at all, he consoles himself with the thought that he belongs to the army which is governed by a higher code than the civil callings, and where neither favoritism nor chicanery can prevail, but where everything depends upon the honorable record of service he builds up for himself. He forgets that in emergencies, or even in ordinary times, his record, of which he is so proud and from which he expects so much, is filed away in the War Department, and is the last thing those in authority ever think of consulting in regard to the unknown and inconspicuous army officer. Indeed, unless there is at home someone sufficiently interested to remember that he has a record, or is making one, he is almost as completely out of mind to those higher up as if he and his record were sleeping together in the tomb of Sesostris.

I would not have it thought that I favor "pull" or personal influence instead of honorable record, but a young soldier, in the first instance at least, represents his home district, and unless he keeps in touch with it through his congressman, his senator, his teacher, the pastor, the judge, or even the governor, he will have no one to speak for him. In

short, unless he is known favorably by the prominent and influential men of his own district, who are naturally interested in him, opportunity may never come his way, no matter what his real merit may be. And without opportunity obscurity is sure to be his lot. He should know that officials of all ranks are so constituted that when called upon to recommend a man for office or promotion, they naturally recommend first him whom they know in person, and second him whom they have heard well spoken of and favorably commended by people of position and influence.

In all that relates to this important subject my class had been no better instructed than those that went before it, nor those that came after it. It had this advantage, however: it found itself within less than a year on the threshold of a great war, where opportunity was looking for the men, and honorable service was thrust upon all who wanted it, so that only the weak and unready failed to get it to their heart's content.

After the usual graduating leave of absence, the men of the class of 1860 were distributed to the corps and regiments for which they had applied or to which they were assigned, and were scattered throughout the United States. Many were sent to the frontier and were there when the Civil War broke out. As I graduated only sixth in general standing, it was my lot to be commissioned a brevet second lieutenant of Topographical Engineers and to be ordered to the headquarters of the District of Washington at Fort Vancouver, on the Columbia River. My orders made it necessary to take the longest ocean and river voyage it was then possible

for any officer to be sent upon to a post within the limits of the United States. It was before the days of the transcontinental railroads, and the only feasible way to my station was by steamship to Aspinwall, thence across the Isthmus by rail to Panama, and again by steamship to San Francisco and Portland. It was, however, what I wanted, and I enjoyed every day of the voyage—all the strange scenes and experiences through which it took me. I sailed from New York late in September, 1860, by one of the Vanderbilt steamers then plying in the Isthmian route, to the east coast, and from Panama up the coast by the Pacific Mail Line. Including a few days' stop-over at San Francisco, it took about a month to reach my destination.

Under the policy of John B. Floyd, then secretary of war, my first orders took me in October, 1860, from New York by the Isthmus of Panama and San Francisco to Fort Vancouver, on the Columbia River. The ship's company contained several courtesy majors and colonels, and, although I was only the ninth brevet second lieutenant in the corps of Topographical Engineers, they cheerfully waived their rank in my favor and unanimously gave me the title of "the general," and "the general" I remained till the voyage ended. As the Zanfrettis of the Ravel troupe were going to try their fortune at San Francisco and were traveling with us, the voyage was a pleasant one. They were jolly, sociable, good-natured people, male and female, and did their best to entertain their fellow-passengers. We crossed the Isthmus by railway, but had got hardly half way over when our train jumped the track. It was raining and very dark,

and the scene, which was ordinarily weird enough, was made more so by a multitude of monkeys, which made the night hideous by their whining and chattering from the overhanging tropical forest.

While at Panama Colonel Talcott, the chief engineer, expressed the opinion, based upon his extensive acquaintance with the entire Isthmus, that the route the railroad occupied, the lowest level then known, was the only one on which a tide-level inter-oceanic ship canal could ever be built. Talcott was an ex-army officer and an able man, whose clear and decided views made a profound impression upon me at the time. They were emphasized more than a decade later by one Anthoine de Gogorza, who had traded up and down Central America for many years. After careful study he had come to the conclusion that a still better route might be found by an exhaustive survey.

The subject was always one of great interest to me, because after the Civil War, when I had returned to duty as a captain of engineers, both General Grant and General Humphreys, then chief of engineers, directed me to keep myself constantly informed on the subject of an inter-oceanic ship canal and its proper location, with the intimation that I should be charged with the further surveys and with the construction when it should be authorized by Congress. Therefore, I read everything that came before the public in regard to the subject, reaching the conclusion that until every possible route had been surveyed with the same care that had been bestowed upon the Isthmus of Panama, that route must be preferred. As no further surveys have been made, that conclusion stands

good to-day. In this faith, many years later, while a member of the National Republican Convention, I framed the resolution favoring an inter-oceanic canal, without designating the route, but a delegate from California, with a vigilance which could not have been greater if it had been paid for, always amended my report by inserting the Nicaragua route. Finally, at the instance, I have always believed, of Senator Foraker, the resolution was passed in such form as to leave the subject indefinite, and the government free to adopt the Panama instead of the Nicaragua route. Thus Colonel Talcott's views were finally adopted, but the great work was changed from a tide-level canal to one with locks and dams. It should be noted, however, that even to this late day there is a difference of opinion as to the wisdom of this decision. Personally I have always contended that the canal should be at tide level, without locks of any kind, and that the Government cannot afford any other than the best possible construction, no matter what it costs.

Our voyage northward was broken by a few hours' stop at Acapulco, and several days at San Francisco. Both were full of interest for me, and I was greatly struck by the importance of San Francisco, the harbor of which was crowded with shipping from all parts of the world. Spaniards, Mexicans, Frenchmen, and Chinamen jostled each other at every corner, and, although the common saying was that there was no Sunday west of Panama, order prevailed on all sides, and it was evident that the Americans were in absolute control. The memory of the "Vigilantes" was fresh in everybody's mind, and with that memory the conviction seemed

widespread that license and frolic might go so far, but no farther.

I remained in the city only long enough to get the first steamer for the northern coast. I neither knew nor cared to know anyone at San Francisco, and on the third morning I embarked for Portland, Oregon. The voyage was rough and kept me seasick till we had crossed the Columbia River bar. The run to Portland was smooth and rapid. The river was broad and stately, and the mountain scenery on either hand the finest I had ever seen, but, finding Portland raw and unfinished, I tarried only long enough to make connections with the little steamer which took me in two hours to Fort Vancouver, on the Columbia, a few miles above the mouth of the Willamette.

My first duty was to report to Captain George Thom and then to call with him on Colonel George Wright, the courtly and courteous district commander. Both were glad to see me, and did what they could to make me feel that I was welcome. I was, of course, invited to join the bachelor officers' mess, and met there several acquaintances from West Point. My first business was to rent and furnish a little frame cottage of two rooms, a few rods outside of the garrison. The first night I called on the family of the commanding general. It was raining and so dark that I found it difficult to keep the path. About half way to the general's I heard someone splashing through the mud toward me, and called out at once: "Who comes there?" The answer came back instantly: "Hallo! is that you, Wilson?" "Yes, Wildrick, how are you?" He had been my cadet first sergeant, and, although we had not met

for three years, we recognized each other's voice instantly. What makes this somewhat remarkable is the fact that neither knew the other was within three thousand miles of Vancouver.

My chief had already one assistant, Lieutenant Dixon, when I reported, and, as he had no professional work for himself or anyone else, he was at a loss to find employment for us. He naturally told me to make myself comfortable, to get acquainted with the ladies and enjoy myself for a few days, all of which I proceeded to do. As there were only three unmarried ladies in the garrison at the time, and none in the village of Vancouver nearby, while there were fourteen bachelors at the post and about fourteen thousand scattered about through the territory, the disparity of the sexes was such as to seriously limit social diversions. The three young women were, of course, charming, but were forced to divide their time, so that no one had a monopoly. They rode with one, walked with another, danced with a third and flirted with all, and both day and night passed gaily enough. The times were growing serious, however. The presidential election was at hand, and even in that far-away corner of the country that was the all-absorbing topic of conversation.

While most of the officers were Northerners and Republicans or Douglas Democrats, there were a few Southerners among us, but no secessionists or disunionists. There was no intolerance and no quarreling. It was too serious for that, and when the news came that Lincoln had been elected the gloom seemed to deepen and the fear to increase that the Union would be disrupted. The Eastern newspapers and the mails were a month on the road, and hence

the suspense weighed heavily on all. With the passage of the ordinance of secession by South Carolina and the failure of the peace conferences, apprehension deepened into a certainty that civil war would follow.

The winter was a dreary one, varied so far as I was concerned by only one visit to the Dalles of the Columbia, one or two trips to Portland, and one to Olympia, the capital of Washington territory. All the duty that could be found for me was to locate and mark out a wagon road through the wilderness, along the Cowlitz from Columbia River to Puget Sound. This gave but little trouble and took less than a fortnight. The route was clearly indicated by nature, and, as it was familiar to the frontiersmen, my task was soon completed and my map duly filed at headquarters. Mounted on an Indian pony, which cost but twenty dollars, with the assistance of a few axemen, I made my way through the forest, cutting out the vine-maple and underbrush, and blazing the road so that it could be easily followed. It is now the route of a double-track railroad used by three transcontinental lines.

Seattle was then the site of a sawmill, and Tacoma but little more. Puget Sound, with its deep water and endless channels, had no commerce, and the country adjacent was broken here and there by one-company military posts to overawe the Indians and hold the country against the encroachments of the Hudson Bay Company. No one then foresaw its wonderful development. The entire coast fifty years later is crowded with large and flourishing cities and towns, all of which received a great and unexpected impetus from the discovery of gold, cop-

per, and coal in Alaska. I frankly confess that when I renewed my acquaintance with the region of my first military service, and extended it to British Columbia, the Yukon District, and Alaska Territory, I deeply regretted that our government had not resolutely enforced its claims to "Fifty-four Forty or Fight," and to a junction with the Russian possessions.

Shortly after reaching Fort Vancouver I went to Olympia, the capital, to make tracings of the land-survey maps of the government reservations in the territory, and on the trip visited Fort Steilacoom, and the settlement at Tacoma. With the exception of one court-martial, this was the most important service I performed during my stay of nine months in the territory. Any intelligent sergeant could have done it at an expense of fifty dollars. The fact is that all the officers in that section had been banished as far as possible from the scene of the coming conflict, and if each had been an undeveloped Napoleon he could not have been more flattered nor more exasperated. The only advantage got from their service on the frontier was ten cents a mile travel allowance, both going and coming. Personally, it was a sort of God-send to me, for, after paying my expenses, the remainder was sufficient to pay my debts and leave me a modest surplus.

On my return from Puget Sound my chief charged me with the care of three government chronometers, doing his best to impress the awful consequences that would follow if I failed to keep them wound. But, withal, my heart was not in it. The army had begun to disintegrate. Dixon of Tennessee and

Anderson of Georgia had resigned, and they were followed shortly by others from the interior. By the first of March, 1861, most of the Southern officers serving in that quarter had gone home or signified their intention of doing so. Two batteries without guns had been ordered South and our garrison had lost a number of subalterns, which made the duty heavier on those who remained. In the midst of the excitement I let my chronometers run down, and although this made my chief unhappy, he passed it over lightly. I confessed my fault and told him frankly that I must find something more important to do, and that, with his permission, I should ask for orders to return to the East. Meanwhile, I should offer my services to the commandant as adjutant of the post. Fortunately, my chief, who was loyal to the backbone, gave me both sympathy and approval, and I entered at once on the duties of post adjutant, performing them to the best of my ability till the very day I received orders to return to the East.

Early in the spring we turned out all the troops that could be mustered and called in the citizens to see them fully armed and equipped for war. On the fourth of July we took two companies to Portland, marched them through the streets, held parade on the public square, and passed them in review with the band playing and the flag flying, to the wild delight of the patriotic people. There was no doubt about the loyalty of that garrison!

Edwin V. Sumner commanded the department of the Pacific at that time, while his brother-in-law, George Wright, commanded the District of Oregon. No braver or more loyal officers ever upheld the

flag, and with their approval the atmosphere in that region was resonant with patriotic salutes from our field guns and patriotic music from our band. But there were no secessionists in that part of the country who dared avow themselves. It was evident that the war, if it came, would rage on the other side of the continent, fourteen thousand miles away by the traveled route, and to that quarter all patriotic eyes were turned.

As the coming storm became more threatening my unhappiness and my anxiety grew apace. I had no shadow of doubt as to the course all graduates ought to follow. It lay perfectly clear before me. My brother, Henry, two years younger than I, had succeeded me at West Point. My brother Bluford had entered college, and I was naturally anxious that both should take the same view and adopt the same course I had marked out for myself. No mail passed that did not carry letters between us, as well as between me and other friends. With each day the line of duty became clearer and more certain, and it is with pride and satisfaction that I record here that neither of my brothers ever hesitated for a moment. Both entered the army and were in active service throughout the war. Our widowed mother, with a sad heart and many tears, but with a gentle, patriotic, and Christian resignation, gave her all to the country. Others, doubtless, made greater sacrifices because they had more sons, but she gave all she had. Fortunately, all were spared to return to her in safety at the end of the conflict.

While I claim no special merit for my correspondence, except that it was patriotic and loyal to the

country, with no suspicion of selfishness or sectionalism, I feel that it will bear publication as an example of how young men of the day met the great crisis without assistance, and found their way into the struggle for the maintenance of the Constitution and the Union.

On April 3, 1861, I wrote my brothers as follows:

. . . Briefly, then, I am for the Union, one and inseparable, now and forever, as a blessing paramount to all others known to the American people. This is the primary principle, the basis of our National honor and prosperity, and above all of our National strength and glory. . . . It is a legacy we are bound in honor to transmit to posterity, as it was transmitted to us. We of this day and generation have no right to decree its dissolution or to join in its destruction, for it concerns not us alone but posterity.

The "right of secession" is a transparent inconsistency, totally inadmissible and at variance with the first idea of stable government. But there is even a stronger reason for denying its validity. The Constitution (Art. I, Sec. X, par. 1 and 2) specially provides that "No state shall enter into any treaty, alliance or confederation," and the tone of that whole instrument is opposed to the idea of secession.

"But the cotton states have seceded." Yes, but secession is rebellion . . . and it may be claimed, rebellion is revolution, and the right of revolution is inalienable. Here we stop, for whoever revolts against constituted authority is guilty of treason and must pay the penalty, if that authority is strong enough to enforce the law. And, further, it is the duty of all constituted authority, whatever be the form of government, to conserve its powers by enforcing the laws.

This right and duty is plainly implied in our Constitution (Art. I, Sec. VIII, par. 14, and Art. II, Sec. III,

par. 1), and, to my mind, leaves no doubt as to what should be the President's course in the present emergency. You may call it "coercion" if you please, but forcible means must be resorted to when all other means shall have failed.

If the Southern states have been aggrieved, it is cause for a demand of redress, but it is no justification for secession. If they have been denied any right under the Constitution, they can and ought to demand justice at the hands of the general government, but they have no right therefor to destroy or dismember that government. . . . I would withold justice from no party and no state, but I most emphatically . . . deny the "right" of any state or association of states to break up and destroy the American Union. It must be maintained peaceably by concession, compromise and kindness if possible . . . but when all these fail there is yet left the stern arbitrament of arms, and the duty of the general government to invoke it. It is conceivable, I admit, that the Constitution might by common consent be so amended as to provide for a peaceable dismemberment of the Union, but as the National charter now stands, Mr. Lincoln, who has been legally elected President, has no option as to the course he must finally pursue. He may defer action, and, indeed, should do so till all hope of reconciliation and adjustment is gone. But when that day comes, the people must support him to the bitter end in maintaining the National unity and taking care that the laws shall be enforced.

As for me, I owe all allegiance and "true faith to the United States of America." They have given me my education and I have solemnly sworn more than once to defend them "against all their enemies and opposers whomsoever." My duty and that of every officer of the army is too plain to be mistaken, and in the hour of danger I only hope my performance of it may be as honest and fearless as my conception of it is clear and decided. I am above all local or sectional prejudice. My country is America and dear as is my native state, I should not hesitate

to march to-morrow against even her, should she array herself against the Constitution and the Union. . . .

Before closing this letter, I want to condemn in the strongest terms the lack of principle, honor, and true faith already shown by many officials in both the civil and military service. President Buchanan has countenanced and retained in office many officials who were openly and avowedly for the dismemberment of the Union. Secretary Floyd has not only retained office while plotting to bring about secession, but has sent 150,000 stands of arms into the Gulf States, for no other purpose than to arm rebellion. He has distributed the regular army so as to render it almost unavailable for any purpose requiring celerity of action. He has even granted leave of absence to Colonel Hardee of the cavalry and the Colonel has accepted it, for the purpose of going to Europe to purchase arms and ammunition for a disaffected state. And, finally, he has accepted the resignation of several officers who had already been appointed to commands in the ranks of rebellion.

Many senators and representatives have in open congress declared their contempt for the Constitution, and invoked its destruction. Judges of the federal courts have deserted their seats and scouted their oath of office. Revenue officers have surrendered their cutters to the mob and trampled their country's flag under foot. Army and navy officers have abandoned their posts and foresworn their allegiance.

. . . If these men who have sworn over and over again, with every new commission, "To bear true faith and allegiance to the United States of America and to serve them honestly and faithfully against all their enemies and opposers whomsoever," have been permitted to go openly and without even a word of rebuke into the ranks of armed rebellion, may we not ask with anger and resentment, what has become of the noble principles of our forefathers and the *fides militum*, which have been the boast of all true

. . . soldiers from the earliest days of civilization down to the present era?

. . . How true and applicable to our own times are the words of Count de las Cases:

. . . "It is a melancholy result of our modern systems of education, which tend so little to elevate our minds that we cannot conceive either the merit or claims of heroic resolutions and sacrifices! We think that all has been said and every act justified, when dangers to our private interests are put forward, little realizing that the richest inheritance we can leave our children is an example of real virtue and a name to which is attached a little true glory."

As all this and more was written before the mail brought the news that Fort Sumter had been attacked and had surrendered, I am content to point to it fifty years later as the true doctrine for officers of the army to stand upon in all like emergencies. But, not satisfied with that, I wrote, May 6, 1861, to the Adjutant General at Washington as follows:

I have the honor to place myself at the disposal of the Secretary of War or the commanding general for such duties with the line of the army or pertaining to my own corps as either may see fit to assign me.

I do this with the hope of being able to render some aid in resisting rebellion, and for the reason that I have had no official duties to perform since my arrival in this department, and no hope of any during the continuance of our internal difficulties.

On the same day I wrote Senator Douglas, whose generous sympathy and support of President Lincoln were still unknown to me:

The motive which prompts this letter will prove, I trust, sufficient apology for addressing you.

I am a brevet second lieutenant in the Corps of Topo-

graphical Engineers, U. S. Army, stationed at this post, with no technical duties to perform and no prospect of any during the continuance of our internal difficulties.

This for a man of my age, just graduated at the Military Academy, would be under the most favorable circumstances an unendurable situation, but at this particular juncture in our National history it is almost insupportable. As an officer of the army, I am bound by a solemn oath: "To bear true faith and allegiance to the United States of America and to serve them honestly and faithfully against all their enemies and opposers whomsoever."

In these times of secession and rebellion the good-will and loyalty of every citizen, however humble, is a matter of importance, hence I depart from accustomed usage. I am ready and willing to act at any time, and in any portion of the country, according to the fullest requirements of this obligation, and I desire through you to tender my services to the War Department for any duty my education fits me for, either in my Corps or in the line of the army.

I believe it has been the custom of the Department to detail or furlough regular officers, particularly those belonging to the staff corps, for the purpose of serving with volunteers or other troops needing instruction. . . .

From the journals that reach us, I see that it has been proposed to increase the regular army by . . . more mounted troops. Should anything of this kind be done, you would confer a great favor on me by presenting my name as that of a suitable person for a commission in one of the new regiments.

I feel assured that such action on your part . . . would receive greater consideration, from the fact that I already hold a commission in the army, and any new appointment would be nothing more than a transfer from a position of idleness to one of activity.

Should the additional force not be intended as a permanent increase of the army, I should prefer being fur-

loughed from duty and ordered East, rather than relinquish my present position entirely.

With the news of the President's call for 75,000 militia, the secession of Virginia, and the certainty of civil war, I also wrote to John A. Logan, who then represented my home district in Congress, and a few days later to my father's old friend and fellow soldier, John A. McClernand, who had been lately the unsuccessful candidate of the Democrats for Speaker. Both of these distinguished citizens, it will be remembered, followed the example of their great leader, Senator Douglas, in giving their adhesion to the government and in offering their support to President Lincoln. Assured of their personal friendship, I had no hesitation in asking for their assistance as a loyal officer to secure an early transfer to the East, either with or without increased rank. I pointed out my earnest desire to secure active service in support of the Union and called special attention to the fact that I had gone into the Topographical Engineers because I thought it offered a better field for useful employment in times of peace than the line, and I dwelt upon the changed condition of affairs due to the war already begun. In short, I begged that I should not be shelved or forgotten at the age of twenty-three in a remote corner of the country, when the Union was face to face with a great war and needed every loyal man it could find to support it. On May 30 I wrote through the Adjutant General directly to Simon Cameron, the secretary of war, to the same effect, and to make sure that my letter would not fail to reach its destination I took the precaution of enclosing it to Logan, with the request that he

should deliver it in person, and I do not doubt that he did it. Finally, in order that I might secure the support of my immediate chief, I asked him to give me his help, and this he did in no uncertain way. My application, after receiving his formal approval, was forwarded to General Sumner through district headquarters, with an endorsement from Colonel Wright as follows:

> Lieutenant Wilson is a young officer of great zeal, ability and devotion to duty, and I recommend him specially for employment on active service.

This brought an immediate reply, dated June 24, 1861, to the effect that:

> There is at present no duty on which Lieutenant Wilson could be employed, but his services will be called into requisition whenever the occasion exists.

Obviously I could do nothing more. I had appealed to everyone I knew and there was nothing left for me but to desert or to possess my soul in patience and wait. Of course, I chose the latter course, but not till July 13 was I made happy by orders from headquarters of the army directing me to proceed forthwith to Washington City and report to the chief of my corps. Who procured this order I never knew, but I do not doubt I owed it to one of the three prominent men whose aid I had so urgently solicited. It brought no promise nor intimation of promotion, but that made no difference to me. What I wanted was useful work and active service, and in order that that should not be delayed I at once gave up my duties as post adjutant and took the first steamer for San Francisco, sailing July 17.

Meanwhile, I disposed of my effects and took leave of my friends, every one of whom seemed interested in my future and wished me a successful and fortunate career. Fort Vancouver was the only permanent military post in which I ever served, and it left me with none but pleasant memories of the officers and ladies I met there. From the veteran commander to the lowest lieutenant, they were a selected lot of whom it may be truthfully said, "The men were all brave and the women all fair." A young widow and two unmarried girls, who were the life of the garrison, were mated in due course, and led happy and useful lives, but I have never seen any of them since.

With Lieutenant Michler, also an officer of the Topographical Engineers, Mrs. Michler, and Lieutenant Hodges of the Quartermaster's Department, I steamed away from Portland on the afternoon of July 17. The current was with us and we made rapid progress. We retired early, but I had hardly fallen asleep when I was aroused by a shock, followed by an exclamation from my room mate, Hodges, who stuck his head out of the cabin window and called out: "Dad burn my skin, if there isn't Coffin Rock!" I answered: "We must dress at once, for if our ship has struck Coffin Rock, there is a hole in her bigger than a barn door, and she will sink in less than a half hour."

It turned out that we had run head on into that well-known obstruction and were filling fast. The captain shifted freight and tried to stop the leak, but his efforts were vain. It was soon apparent that the ship could not be kept afloat and consequently the captain beached her a few miles below

Mt. Coffin on the only bar that would hold her. Even then her stern sank, while her bow and 'midships held to the shelving beach a few feet from the land. By daylight we were all ashore with our belongings. With the help of my companions I got a spare sail from the ship and soon had comfortable shelter for our party at the edge of a wheat field overlooking the scene. Shortly after daylight I returned to the ship and got a liberal supply of bread, boiled ham, cake, pickles, coffee, plates, knives, and forks. We had a jolly picnic, and had arranged to pass the night there when a rescue boat arrived, and took us back to Portland at an early hour the next day.

The army officers returned to Fort Vancouver, where we were regarded as "shipwrecked brethren saved from a watery grave." We had a few pleasant days, and then, with the prayers of our friends, started again on the 23d by the steamship *Cortez,* Captain Huntington commanding. Without further accident or delay we were in San Francisco at noon July 26. Here we had another wait, and employed the time visiting our friends at Benicia and the Presidio, where we were entertained with dinners and parties till we began the long voyage by the way of Panama to New York.

We sailed for the Isthmus by the *Golden Gate,* Captain Pierson commanding, on August 1. Our party, reinforced at San Francisco by Major Floyd-Jones, Captains McPherson, Crook, De Hart, Hardie, Hodges, and B. F. Smith, and Lieutenant Connor, all going home to take part in the war, now numbered nine, representing nearly all branches of the regular service. Several of the number, notably

McPherson and Crook, were destined to rise rapidly to great distinction. Those less fortunate served worthily till death or peace put an end to their dreams of glory.

The return voyage was made memorable to me by the acquaintance and friendship of McPherson, which lasted till his death as a major general three years later. He was one of many who rose solely by his own merit. Graduating at the head of his class six years before the outbreak of the war, he had reached the rank of first lieutenant only in the corps of engineers, but just before sailing he received notice of a captaincy in his own corps and of an appointment as captain in one of the new regiments, accompanied by orders to report in Washington without delay. Slightly over six feet tall, with a commanding figure, a Jove-like head, and flashing dark eyes, he was as fine a specimen of manhood as any race could produce. With a mind illuminated by learning and manners made charming by a sunny and hopeful temperament, he was the joy of our party and the favorite of everybody on the ship. We walked and talked together both day and night for over three weeks, and he opened his soul to me as though he had known me always. While he had not yet made up his mind to accept service in the line, it was yet certain by the time he reached Washington that he would be a captain of engineers and eligible to the command of a company of "sappers and miners," which was the highest command a captain of his corps could attain. Lee and McClellan had both served with the only engineer company in the war with Mexico, and both had gained such renown there that they were by

common consent regarded as the most promising soldiers of their day. But McPherson supposed it to be far above his reach, though his mind turned toward it as the surest way to a glorious career. I encouraged him by every argument I could bring to bear to put forth all his influence to get the detail. He was as modest as a girl and had no powerful friends, but one night, after considering the project in all its bearings and possibilities for the hundredth time, he exclaimed: "Well, I'll go for it, and if I can only get orders to raise such a company with you for my first lieutenant, I shall be satisfied even if I am killed in the first battle!"

That settled it. When we arrived in Washington a few weeks later we were both surprised and gratified that our respective chiefs, already superannuated, were so well pleased with our plan that they permitted us practically to write our own orders. Needless to add, we sent ourselves to Boston —McPherson to raise a company and I to assist a captain of my own corps in raising another. The two corps of engineers had not yet been merged, as was done by the next Congress. Meanwhile the war grew so fast and the red tape became so entangled that neither of us ever had the honor of commanding a company of "sappers and miners." Our ambition in those days was a modest one, but it was genuine and would have satisfied us completely.

Our ship touched at Acapulco on Friday, August 9. I had hoped to land there some day and make my way through Mexico to Vera Cruz and thence to New York. But war had changed all that, and even the most rapid voyage was far too slow

for our impatience. The ship had hardly dropped anchor when the consul brought on board a copy of the *New York Herald* containing an account of the first day's battle at Bull Run. Seizing it from his hands, by common consent I mounted a chair in the main saloon, and read it aloud to the assembled passengers. Trembling with excitement, I hurried through the glorious news. There had been a successful preliminary skirmish, after which McDowell's patriotic volunteers had thrown themselves headlong against the embattled Confederates and swept them from the field. Victory had perched upon the banners of the Union! The Constitution and the laws had been vindicated! The Confederacy had been crushed and peace would be re-established in a few days! There was no word about defeat, no suggestion of doubt or delay, and the exciting news was received with rapturous applause. It satisfied the most sceptical of us that the war was over and we went ashore rejoicing that the happy end was in sight. McPherson and I got an excellent dinner, laid in a supply of fruit, and aired our West Point Spanish with the natives; but that night, when again under way, we confessed to more than a shade of disappointment that the fortunate result had been attained without the slightest help from us.

Without anxiety we settled down for another week of reading and walking, but as our good ship ploughed her way toward home I became greatly interested in Hodson's services in the Sepoy Rebellion and set about preparing a plan for the organization of an intelligence corps for our army based on his experience. After some study I concluded that a battalion of five hundred men and officers

selected from both regulars and volunteers with special reference to brightness, zeal, discipline, and activity, divided into six troops, and mounted on the best horses that could be found, would be sufficient to start with. I thought that each troop should have one captain, two lieutenants, one first sergeant, five duty sergeants, one quartermaster sergeant, five corporals, ten first-class privates, and fifty second-class privates. The first-class privates should be enlisted as draughtsmen and the officers should be all West Pointers, selected for special aptitude from either corps of engineers and the line of the army. All vacancies should be filled by examination and selection, and officers and men alike should be armed with pistols and swords only. Obviously the special function of this corps would be to make reconnoissances, to discover the enemy's movements, and to draw sketches and maps of the theater of active operations. I worked out the details of organization and equipment, but when I reached Washington I could find no one to listen to me, or to recommend that my proposition should be carried into effect. Nothing, therefore, ever came of it, except that when I took command of a division of cavalry in the Army of the Potomac in 1864, I detailed Captain Boice, one of my best officers, together with the proper complement of commissioned and non-commissioned officers and privates for a company, which, so long as I remained with the division, was used to my entire satisfaction in the way indicated above. My division was never surprised and never ran into an ambush, nor even into a tight place, for lack of information. Captain Boice and his company were always perfectly informed, and

I am persuaded that such an organization on a larger scale would have been not only entirely successful, but most useful.

We arrived at Panama August 15, and the consul, as before, brought us the latest papers from New York. Every passenger was anxious to hear the sequel, and I made haste to mount a chair and read the news. The latest details from Bull Run converted the preliminary victory into a disgraceful and overwhelming defeat. The enemy, reënforced by Johnston from the Shenandoah Valley, had not only checked McDowell's turning movement, but had driven the Union forces from the field and forced them back to the defences of Washington.

It was only too certain that the war was not over, but just fairly beginning. We crossed the Isthmus that night without accident or delay, and by eight o'clock were all safely on board the *North Star,* steaming rapidly toward New York.

It is worthy of note that McPherson and I no longer had any doubt as to the course we should pursue. We realized that we should find a totally different state of affairs at Washington from that which we had pictured to ourselves at Acapulco, and our desires for a little true glory were strangely at variance with our patriotism. We were young and ambitious, and while sincerely sorry that the Union had not triumphed over its enemies, I must say we were all impatient to get to the scene of action and to know where the fortunes of war would land us.

Although our ship was a good one and the weather favorable, the days passed slowly, but withal we made our land-fall early on August 23,

and got ashore that afternoon. From the time we were within sight of land we realized that the country must have been thoroughly aroused. The slopes of Staten Island were covered with the white tents of the volunteers, the Stars and Stripes were fluttering over the camps and fortifications, and the sharp rattle of drums seemed to fill the air. It was an exciting and glorious scene, the full significance of which did not dawn upon us till we knew the patriotic response the country had made to the call of the President. The war was really under way both East and West. A successful battle had been fought at Wilson's Creek. The brave and aggressive Lyon had laid down his life, and everywhere patriots were rallying to the defence of the Union and for the overthrow of the Southern Confederacy.

I

THE WAR FOR THE UNION

Report at Washington—Visit McDowell's Army—Ordered to Boston—Chief topographical engineer of Port Royal Expedition—An army corps wasted.

We were now within reach of the War for the Union and McPherson and I were resolved to get into it without delay. Pausing at New York only long enough to call on our friends, we pushed on to Washington the next morning. There were no sleeping cars in those days, and unfortunately I fell violently ill and was compelled to leave the train at Wilmington. Fortunately, I met Dr. Grimshaw, the best physician of the town, at the station, and, although I had never seen him before, he took me to the "Indian Queen," put me to bed and cared for me tenderly till the crisis had passed.

As soon as I could leave my bed, I drove to the country residence of Colonel Andrews, the father of my classmate and of the young girl who five years later became my wife. I was at once surrounded by an atmosphere of comfort, sympathy, and patriotism. My host, a gentleman of the old school, had received his early education with Meade and Kearney at a private military school and had played soldier with a company of Delaware dragoons at

his own expense for many years. He was, besides, one of the few men of the state who had voted for Fremont. Naturally a Free-soiler and a Republican, he had supported Lincoln with all his might and was one of the first to answer the call for three months' volunteers as lieutenant colonel of the First Delaware Infantry. When the regiment was reorganized and mustered into the service for three years he was its colonel. Handsome, accomplished, and learned in military history as well as in tactics, he was one of the best instructors and disciplinarians of the volunteer army.

Quickly restored, I reached Washington three days later and early on August 27 I reported at the War Department, expecting to receive orders at once. Full of enthusiasm and anxiety and longing for active service, I innocently assumed that the service was longing for me. I supposed that there were a hundred places where I could make myself useful, but none of them was for me. The chief of my corps, a patriotic, loyal gentleman, was superannuated, and, instead of having any definite idea as to how or where I should be used, he seemed to be half dazed and told me to look about a few days and make up my mind as to where I should like to serve. It was both disappointing and discouraging. The enemy was almost in sight of the capital from the heights beyond the Potomac, camps and entrenchments surrounded it on all sides, volunteers were pouring in from the North, and the air was full of bustle and excitement. No one seemed to be in charge, however, or to know what should be done to organize, discipline, and direct the forces that

were rallying to the support of the Union, "three hundred thousand strong!" I found my classmate, Andrews, who had arrived a few weeks ahead of me, connected with the provost guard, in charge of a houseful of Southern women, Confederate sympathizers, who were suspected of acting as spies and sending information to the Southern leaders. With "suspicion poisoning his brother's cup," secrecy and mystery in every movement, doubt, hesitation, and uncertainty in every measure, it was a time to try men's souls and to shake the courage of the boldest.

With all Lincoln's simplicity, the White House lay beyond the reach of a second lieutenant, but, fortunately, both custom and duty required me to call upon the General-in-Chief, the aged and patriotic Lieutenant General Scott. Although a Virginian, no shadow of suspicion had ever been cast upon his loyalty. I found him still grand and majestic, but borne down by the weight of his laurels and of his public services. All eyes were turned upon him for inspiration and guidance, and he gave even me a sympathetic reception. Although clad yet with power and responsibility, he was the setting sun, and even at that early day the sycophants and place-hunters no longer crowded the entrance to his private office. Shown in at once, I found him seated at his desk, clad in full uniform, a herculean figure like a mighty ruin, "whose very frown terrified the glance its magnificence attracted." He was all courtesy and benevolence. Rising with difficulty, he extended his hand and waved me graciously to a seat near him, calling me his dear young friend. Making haste to tell him who I was and that I was just in from

the far-away Columbia and had called to pay my respects, I assured him of my loyalty, my desire for service, and my sympathy for him in the great emergency which had overtaken him and the country. Thereupon he spoke in substance as follows:

"We have indeed fallen upon perilous times! The country is torn by treason and rebellion. It has no guide and no army. I am old and feeble, and the men I have depended upon to help bear my burdens, and, if need be, to take my place, have sent in their resignations and are going over to the enemy. Lee has gone, Beauregard has gone, Johnston has gone, Hardee has gone, and the best of the younger officers are following them. How we shall make head against them, or how it will all end I dare not say, but my heart is full of doubt and sorrow!"

I confess I was greatly surprised at this extraordinary outbreak of lamentation to a junior lieutenant of the army, though I had heard that the aged chieftain was much broken and discouraged. Viewing his tremulous speech as a permission, if not an invitation, to reply, I broke out:

"But pardon me, General; all the best men have not gone and are not going! You should not forget that we have McClellan, McDowell, Sumner, Rosecrans, Buell, Thomas, Anderson, Sherman and Wright and many other gallant officers, both regulars and volunteers, who will stand by the old flag to the last. The Northern states, with all their resources, are united in support of the Union and the Constitution, and in the end, with you to guide us, we shall not fail!"

At this outburst the old hero's face brightened into a smile, and, stiffening himself proudly, he said: "I thank you, my young friend; that is the true spirit and I am sure it will lead us to victory! I know you will help, and that the younger men will prove our main dependence."

Thereupon I took my leave and joined the chief-of-staff, Colonel Cullum, in the outer office almost immediately. He also received me warmly, and, after congratulating me on my long interview, assured me that I had made a favorable impression upon the Lieutenant General, that he would surely keep his eye on me, and that as an evidence of his interest he wanted me to go to West Point as an instructor of cadets.

I could not conceal my disappointment, but, fortunately, this unexpected offer did not throw me off my guard. It astonished and disappointed me, but, without a moment's hesitation, I declared that I could not think of accepting the detail, adding with emphasis that if it were insisted on I should resign from the regular army and go back to my native state and enter the volunteers without delay.

I had not dared to say that I was looking for employment, but when this offer came I ventured to suggest that I might better be employed as an officer of a mounted intelligence corps, the organization of which I briefly summarized. Of course, this fell on dull ears, but in taking leave I was glad enough to have the assurance that I should not be sent to West Point, and that I must take such detail as might reach me through the regular channels.

In these later days when it is the fashion to magnify the virtues of Lee, not only as a military man, but as a patriot, it seems to me that the country is in danger of forgetting its immense debt of gratitude to General Scott, who was fully Lee's equal as a soldier and far greater than Lee as a patriot. His conquest of Mexico was a performance of the first rank and that is more than can be said of Lee's best campaign. Scott's patriotism, unlike Lee's, was neither provincial nor bounded by state lines, but was national and all-embracing. He gave his services at all times and all places to the whole country, without hesitation and without question. Like Douglas, his example was worth an army to the Union cause. All eyes were, indeed, turned to the veteran Brevet Lieutenant General Scott, second of that rank in America, for inspiration and guidance, and no one looked to him with more anxiety than Lincoln, the newly-elected President. Happily both for him and the cause he upheld, Lincoln did not look in vain. The old soldier, staggering under the weight of years, put behind him all appeals to state pride and, like an old and seasoned oak, stood erect and unbending amid the raging storm of secession and civil war.

To one who appealed to his pride and offered him at the same time the command of the Virginia forces he sternly replied:

"Sir! I have served my country under the flag of the Union for more than fifty years, and as long as God permits me to live I will defend that flag with my sword, even if my own native state assails it."[1]

[1] "Lincoln," Nicolay and Hay, Vol. IV, p. 103.

To another, bringing him the promise of wealth and honor if he would follow his native state, he indignantly said:

"Go no further! It is best that we part here before you compel me to resent a mortal insult."

Broken in body, but not in spirit, and conscious of his unfitness for field duty, it will be recalled that the old hero had selected Robert E. Lee as his successor and had urged his appointment to the active command of the army upon the President and the Secretary of War. With no misgivings as to Lee's loyalty, Lincoln had promoted him to be colonel of his regiment and Lee had accepted this promotion at his hands. It is easy, therefore, to understand Scott's grief and deep disappointment when Lee resigned and left the capitol to march under "new and odious banners." Virginia secretly passed the Ordinance of Secession on April 17. On the 18th F. P. Blair, at Lincoln's request and pursuant, doubtless, to Scott's recommendation, offered the command of the Union forces to Lee. On April 20 Lee sent his resignation to Scott, and in it expressed his purpose never again to draw his sword except to repel invasion from his native state. But on April 22 he was appointed to the command of the Virginia forces and on the 23d was formally invested at Richmond with full authority. He had not only accepted promotion from Lincoln, but had written his own son a most creditable letter characterizing secession as revolution and anarchy. He had listened to Scott and Blair, if not in an approving, at least in a wavering, mind. He left Washington and its authorities uncertain as to what his final reply would be. According to Cameron, he posi-

tively signified his acceptance. According to Montgomery Blair, he did not refuse but agreed to take the offer under advisement. Both of these distinguished men would ordinarily be accepted as credible witnesses, and they are quoted by Nicolay and Hay in support of the conclusion that Lee's attitude was one of "hesitation and indecision."[1] It should, however, be noted that Lee himself not only positively denies that he ever intimated his acceptance, but, on the contrary, at once declined the offer. Giving him the full benefit of his denial, the cold historical fact remains that General Scott believed in his loyalty and trusted him, and in view of their great intimacy it is inconceivable, if such had not been the case, that Scott would have ever consented to his promotion to colonel or recommended him as his successor. It is also true that without waiting for the acceptance of his resignation he hastened to accept the command which his old friend had already peremptorily declined. Moreover, he did not live up to his declared purpose never again to draw his sword except to repel invasion. He entered upon duty at Richmond in face of Lincoln's public declaration that Virginia would not, in the first instance, be invaded. To say the least, Colonel Lee's action, taking him upon his own ground, was inconsistent and premature and left room for the worst possible interpretation of his patriotism and motives.

Elsewhere I have frankly given the strong and unfavorable impression which his course made upon my mind. The war has been over well-nigh fifty years and time has clarified our vision and given

[1] "Lincoln," Vol. IV, p. 98.

us a better perspective. It has also done its gentle work of rubbing down and obscuring the rough points of difference, while it has softened the bitterness of sectional animosity. I cheerfully recognize the many admirable qualities of the great Confederate leader and yet I cannot but contrast, as history will, his conduct with that of Lieutenant General Scott and with that of another great Virginian, Major General George H. Thomas, who was as well beloved of his men under the endearing title of "Old Pap Thomas" as ever "Uncle Bob" was and who was his equal in every soldierly quality and lofty Christian virtue.

It is useless to speculate on what might have been the result if Lee had stood firmly by the flag of the Union, under which he had already won honor and fame. He was at heart neither a secessionist nor a disunionist. He had freed his slaves. He loved liberty. He was every inch a soldier, and it is hardly too much to assume that with the tremendous resources of the North at his command he might have stayed, if not turned, the tide of disunion in one or two campaigns, and thus divided with Washington and Lincoln the highest honors which a reunited and grateful country could bestow.

The first free day after reaching Washington, McPherson and I borrowed horses and crossed the Potomac to ride the lines, look at the troops, and visit our friends. We started early and were gone till night, and, although we saw plenty of well-fed officers and men, the impression produced upon us was far from encouraging. We dined with McDowell and his staff at Arlington House, and were well received by all. McPherson met many friends and

I at least met no enemies. We kept both eyes and ears open and took careful note of all we saw and heard, especially at headquarters. McDowell, still in chief command, made a deep impression upon me, but I regret to add that it was not altogether favorable. He was at that time in the full flush of mature manhood, fully six feet tall, deep-chested, strong-limbed, clear-eyed, and in every respect a fine and impressive soldier, but at dinner he was such a Gargantuan feeder and so absorbed in the dishes before him that he had but little time for conversation. While he drank neither wine nor spirits, he fairly gobbled the larger part of every dish within reach, and wound up with an entire watermelon, which he said was "monstrous fine!" That he was in every way a true patriot and an accomplished soldier there is no room to doubt. As we rode back to the city in the afternoon McPherson and I discussed him freely, and, allowing him every professional qualification, we agreed that no officer who was so great a gourmand as he could by any chance prove to be a great and successful leader of men. After a career full of vicissitudes it turned out as we had predicted. Many excuses and explanations have been given for his failure. A formal court of inquiry found nothing in his conduct to condemn, but I have never doubted from the last day of August, 1861, down to the present day that McPherson and I had correctly diagnosed the fatal defect in his make-up as a military man.

Having learned all we could in and about Washington, we went the next morning to our respective bureaus, where each was permitted to select his own assignment. Having concurred in choosing Boston

as a recruiting station for engineer soldiers, we were assured that orders would be issued accordingly. This conclusion was reached on September 2, 1861, on which day I was twenty-four years old, but my troubles were not yet ended. McPherson's orders came without delay, and he proceeded at once to his station, but mine were held back under one pretext or another till the 6th, and I did not reach Boston till September 9. Even then I did not find my commanding officer on the ground, and through an unseemly squabble between the veteran chiefs of the two corps of engineers, I never received authority to make actual enlistments. I, of course, joined McPherson and several other regular officers already at that station, but all were left more or less to their own resources without explicit orders or definite duties.

It was a trying and discouraging experience. Six weeks passed in worse than idleness. On my own responsibility, I selected an excellent man for first sergeant, but that was as far as I ever got. I could do nothing further without authority. Meanwhile, through friends in Illinois I had received an offer of a major's commission in Colonel Dickey's cavalry regiment and had decided to accept it if I could get leave of absence, when, without notice or intimation of any sort, on the night of October 14, I received a printed order through the House telegraph from the adjutant general to "repair forthwith to Annapolis, Maryland, and report to Brigadier General Thomas W. Sherman for duty." It was an unexpected flash out of an overcast sky, and, rushing into the room where my discouraged companions were assembled, I waved my long white

message before them and bade them an exultant good-bye. I was both the happiest and most envied man in Boston that night. Hurriedly pitching my things together, I took the first train by the Stonington line for New York, and reached Annapolis on the second morning thereafter.

I found a great force gathering there for an unknown destination, but that was no concern of mine. I asked no questions. Reporting to the commanding general, he announced me in orders as chief topographical engineer on his staff and told me to get ready as soon as possible with assistants and materials for active service in the field. There was a full staff of able men, among whom were my classmates, Tardy of the Engineers and Porter of the Ordnance, and my friend, O'Rorke, who had just graduated from West Point. All were glad to see me and all as ignorant as I was of the strength or the destination of the expeditionary corps to which we were attached.

General "Tim Sherman" of artillery fame, at that time in the full maturity of his powers, was in command and his record was of the best. His habits were good, his technical knowledge great, his experience varied and extensive, and his character above reproach. With a handsome and impressive figure, flashing blue eyes, martial bearing, austere manners, and a voice that startled you like an electric shock, he was deservedly regarded as one of the ablest, most self-reliant, and most promising officers in the regular army. A direct descendant of Roger Sherman, he was justly regarded not only as possessing all the virtues of an illustrious ancestry, but as sure to rise on his own merits to the

highest rank as a soldier. Indeed, it was generally thought that he was the ablest man of his name, and that the country was most fortunate in having him as one of the commanders of its army. But, notwithstanding his high and masterful qualities, he turned out to be a martinet of violent and ungovernable temper, poorly qualified to train and to command volunteers. In a force of established discipline and organization he would have been as brave a corps commander as Ney or Lannes, for he showed himself afterward in the assault of Port Hudson to be as resourceful and as intrepid as either of those great soldiers. With all his fine qualities, he was too exacting, too impatient, and too violent to get on with his troops. His part in the management of the Port Royal expedition was on the whole unfortunate. Although it was eminently successful in its preliminary stages, it soon became paralyzed, and, instead of pushing boldly inland and inflicting irreparable injury to the rebel cause, it simply resulted in neutralizing an entire army corps of good troops, keeping them on useless coastwise service entirely out of the theater of active operations, when they should have been doing effective work elsewhere.

II

PORT ROYAL EXPEDITION

Sherman's staff—Loading steamship—Savannah River—Venus Point—Siege of Fort Pulaski—General Hunter—General Benham—James' Islands—Secessionville—Officers of staff.

The staff of the expeditionary corps, composed of selected officers, were all graduates of the Military Academy. L. H. Pelouze was the adjutant; Q. A. Gillmore chief engineer, with Tardy and O'Rorke assistants; McNutt chief of ordnance, with Shunk and Porter assistants; John Hamilton chief of artillery, Saxton chief quartermaster, Morgan chief commissary, and Wilson chief topographical engineer. The brigade commanders, H. G. Wright, Isaac I. Stevens, and Egbert L. Viele, were also West Pointers, while the troops were mainly from New York and the New England states, and although recently called into service, were as good as the country could furnish. On October 21 headquarters and the assembled troops sailed from Annapolis and arrived at Fort Monroe early next morning, where they joined the naval escort under Admiral DuPont. Here several days' delay occurred in correcting the stowage of the ordnance supplies. Through neglect on the part of the chief of ordnance,

ammunition which should have been stored on top was placed at the bottom and other freight was piled on it. Water, coal, and rations were getting low and a good deal of confusion prevailed, in consequence of which and because of the superstition against sailing on Friday, the flotilla did not sail till the 29th. It was composed of the flagship *Wabash,* with sixteen men-of-war of various sizes and description, thirty-one transports carrying troops and supplies, and twenty-five chartered schooners carrying coal; in all, seventy-two vessels, with about twenty-five thousand soldiers and five thousand sailors. The naval vessels and transports were formed in double echelon of three lines, covered front, flank, and rear by naval vessels, all making a most imposing array. It was altogether the most formidable armada ever sent out by the United States up to that time, and the great question with the staff assembled on the deck of the Collins liner, *Atlantic,* was, what was its destination?

Sherman was reticent and austere, and although fairly at sea, none of us dared ask him where we were going. He and Wright were the only ones who knew, though there was some talk about sealed orders to be opened on the second day out. As we had wind enough off Hatteras on that day to disarrange the lines and scatter the smaller vessels, several of which were unseaworthy, many of the officers and most of the men were so seasick they did not care what port they were making for. Savannah was the favorite of the guessers, but to those who followed the course we were sailing Port Royal was soon recognized as our destination. On the 3d there was no longer any doubt. The next day we crossed

the bar and anchored, but, instead of attacking at once, two days were spent in cautious reconnoissances, and it was not till 10 A. M. of the 7th that the fleet sailed into the harbor and opened fire on the enemy's batteries. It was a splendid sight as the ships steamed slowly up one side of the harbor and down the other between the rebel batteries, delivering first one broadside and then the other till the enemy's guns were silenced and his forts dismantled. The Confederate flag was shot away early, but the forts did not cease firing nor the garrisons decamp till about half-past two. The Stars and Stripes were run up to 2.45 P. M., and the victory was ours. Impatient at the caution and delay, I was the first man ashore and spent the afternoon examining the batteries and getting the lay of the land.

The victory was an important one, but not so much for the trophies it yielded or the footing it gave us at the best harbor on the Southern coast as for the example it furnished and the benefits which were to follow it in an entirely different quarter. Up to that time it was considered impracticable for guns on shipboard to contend successfully with guns in shore batteries; but, to the surprise of all, even of the naval officers themselves, in the entire fleet only eight men were killed and twenty-three wounded. The wooden ships steamed several times between the batteries and were struck many times, but not one of them was disabled. When it is remembered that the guns in the shore batteries were of similar caliber and construction and occupied emplacements of somewhat greater command than those on shipboard, and that the action, which lasted four hours and a half, was at close range in

broad daylight, with everything favorable for accurate firing, the significance of it all will be more easily understood. All the circumstances were carefully noted and stored up for future reference. As it turned out, this experience was destined to play a decisive part in front of Vicksburg, where it was conclusively recounted, justifying the opinion that both gunboats and transports could run the river batteries without serious loss.

The Port Royal expedition itself yielded but little additional advantage. Instead of pushing up Broad River with his infantry, landing at Beaufort and moving against Pocotaligo, where he could have seized and broken the railroad from Savannah to Charleston and thus deliver a vital blow, Sherman contented himself, first, with occupying the islands and freeing the negroes; second, with besieging and capturing Fort Pulaski on the Savannah River, and, third, with making an abortive movement against Charleston. All of this was useful to the navy in perfecting the blockade of the Southern coast, but for the actual work done one-third of the land forces would have been quite sufficient, while the other two-thirds could have been sent North to assist the army of the Potomac long before it became really necessary. The navy had done its work slowly and cautiously, and, on the whole, successfully, while the army did practically nothing but sit down and hold the sea islands which the navy had captured for it.

Instead of grasping the situation—pushing vigorously inland on a line presenting no obstacles but clearly open—Sherman established a fortified camp at Hilton Head and gave his immediate attention to

the siege of Fort Pulaski, which he had already turned and isolated.

The preliminary operations leading to the capture of that fort were pushed with zeal, ability, and complete success. They afforded me an opportunity for much interesting service, some of it entirely out of my own department, but all most instructive. The construction of the entrenched camp on Hilton Head and the conduct of the siege of Fort Pulaski were, of course, under the immediate charge of Gillmore and his assistants, but all the explorations and surveys both by land and water were conducted by me. In order that I might get from island to island and become familiar with the neighboring sounds, rivers, creeks, and inlets, it was necessary that I should have a swift rowboat. This was before the day of steam and electric launches, and as our quartermaster had failed to bring a supply of cutters, I had to find one suitable for my use. Fortunately, I was not long in getting one from a plantation nearby with seats and rowlocks for ten men. She was long, narrow, black, and beautifully modelled, with a good tiller and a cockpit large enough to hold my India-rubber bed and supplies. Manned by ten stout sea-island negroes, all splendid oarsmen and perfectly at home anywhere for fifty miles up and down the coast, I could make eight or nine miles an hour and on a spurt could pass an ordinary steamer. Before ten days had passed I had been into every creek between Pull-and-be-damned, behind Dawfuskie, through Calibogue Sound and the back passages to North Edisto. In a few weeks more I extended my operations through Wall's Cut, New River, Tybee Roads, and the Savannah River to Ossabaw Sound.

What the coast survey maps did not show my negro coxswain, Sammy Pope, pointed out with unerring accuracy. My operations outside of our lines were necessarily conducted during the night, and with muffled oars I moved from place to place, threading the narrow passages and taking the short cuts as noiselessly and as swiftly as a phantom boat could have done it.

The first of the staff to feel the effects of exposure were Shunk and Porter. Late in November the latter fell violently ill and during his confinement, at the request of the commanding general, I took over his duties. They consisted mostly of mounting, dismounting, moving, and remounting six, eight, and ten-inch guns on the main line of defences, and for a week they afforded me a lot of very interesting work. In one day I handled as many as four guns, one of which was a ten-inch Columbiad, taking them from one emplacement to another. After this was done I was sent to dismantle a sea-coast battery which the enemy had erected on South Edisto and armed with two eight-inch guns. I had discovered it in one of my expeditions, and the day after, reporting it to Sherman, he sent me with a company of volunteer engineers to dismantle it and bring in the guns. Of course, I had supplied myself with all the necessary tackle-blocks, skids, and lighters, and, as it was down-hill work, I was not long in getting the guns dismounted and on board the lighter. One chassis and one top carriage followed rapidly and another was satisfactorily on the ways; but as it was getting late and I was afraid night might overtake us with our task uncompleted, I was using a handspike myself. As the carriage was

passing over the gunwale of the boat one of the maneuvering bolts caught against it. Thereupon I threw my whole weight on the handspike, lifting the carriage clear of the obstruction, which brought all its weight on the short end of the lever and threw me as from a catapult clear across the lighter, ten feet into the air, heels over head, into the water as neatly as if I had been diving from a spring-board. Much surprised, but uninjured, I rose to the surface and struck out for the shore. My volunteers naturally laughed heartily, but did not fail to give me their sympathy and help. Taking hold with renewed vigor, the task was soon finished, and the expedition on its way back to Hilton Head, to which I made haste with my swift cutter to report my success to the commanding general.

Severe as he was generally, his face relaxed into an approving smile when I told him of my misadventure. For the first time he invited me to take a drink, but seemed both surprised and pleased when I declined.

Two or three nights later he sent for me, and as I reported at his tent said with evident impatience:

"Mr. Wilson, how long do you think it would take you to load the steamship *Ben Deford* with rations and supplies for the garrison at Fernandina?"

I replied at once: "I don't know exactly, but I suppose it will take me four or five hours."

Whereupon the General broke out:

"Why—blankety, blank, blank! you astonish me! Saxton and his blankety-blank quartermasters say it will take three days."

Fearing I might have made a mistake, I added: "But I must have all the men I can work."

"Oh, that's all right! You can have the whole blankety-blank command! How many do you want?"

Seeing that I was in for the job, I replied:

"Two regiments, one for two hours and the other for the rest of the time."

Thereupon he ordered Pelouze to turn out the Eighth Michigan and the Ninth Maine, each a thousand strong, and instruct their colonels to report forthwith to Lieutenant Wilson at the wharf and obey all his orders to the letter.

I had never loaded a steamship in my life, but, having seen a gang of roustabouts load the river steamer *Liahtuna* at the Shawneetown levee, I thought I could swing the job if I had not made a terrible mistake. Walking down to the wharf, I found the three thousand ton steamship lying alongside, and the captain impatiently waiting for his cargo. I told him my orders and asked him how fast he could stow freight. He replied as fast as I could send it aboard. "All right, Captain! Now turn out all your officers, man all your hatches, openings and gangways, and take everything as it comes, for this ship has got to be loaded and go to sea before daylight!" He thought it impossible, but said he would do his best, and he did.

The warehouse was within fifty yards, and at precisely eleven the freight began to come to the wharf and to pass into the hold of the ship as fast as a thousand strong men could move it. For two hours they worked at the top of their speed, and I never saw officers or men work more rapidly or more willingly. The way they handled boxes, barrels, bales,

and sacks would have made an Ohio River steamboat man happy. At one o'clock the relief regiment took up the task, and within two hours and a half the hold of the ship was not only full, but her hurricane deck was piled up with hay to the top of the metal wind-sails. By four o'clock she had cast loose and was on her way to sea. I had made good and, sitting down on the top of a pile at the end of the wharf, I watched through the gray dawn till she was hull down, crossing the bar, headed south, and then I called at Sherman's tent on the way to my own and said: "General, the *Ben Deford* is at sea and the work of loading her was done in less than five hours."

The General got up at once, his austere manner all gone, his face wreathed with smiles, and his voice ringing with thanks and compliments. "Come in, my boy, come in and let's have a bottle of champagne to celebrate the occasion!" Again I declined, for sleep and not stimulants was what I needed.

As soon as Porter got well enough for duty I was detailed as the recorder of a board for the examination of such volunteer officers as might be ordered before it. The first was a colonel from Maine, who forestalled a technical examination by requesting the privilege of making a statement to the board. He was a large, heavy man, about sixty years of age, manifestly unfit for active service, which he frankly admitted. But he was a man of influence in his state, and had raised and taken command of his regiment as a patriotic duty. He declared that forty years ago military work was his delight, that he loved to train with the militia, to wear the uniform, and prance about on horseback to the sound

of martial music; but actual war was a different thing, for which he frankly confessed himself entirely unprepared. But this was not all. He added just as frankly that he was too old to learn, and proposed to send in his resignation at once, if the board would suspend proceedings and save him from further humiliation by recommending its acceptance. Of course, it granted his request, and as there were several other cases of the same sort, it disposed of them promptly in like manner. It was in session only three days, during which time it rid the command of all the objectionable officers ordered before it.

After this duty was completed I had a period of idleness, lasting nearly all the month of December. Having reached the conclusion that the expedition had spent its force and would do but little more, I became restless and determined to secure, if possible, a transfer to a more active field of operations. I had private instructions from my bureau chief to keep him informed of my employments and observations, and did not fail to do so; but in the midst of my discontent I was sent on December 30 with a small force to occupy Dawfuskie Island and reconnoiter the rivers and marshes between the island, New River, Savannah River, and the mainland. It is a region of salt marsh, sluggish inlets, and narrow, crooked creeks, which I explored thoroughly. On the last night of the year at midnight I entered the Savannah River by Wall's Cut and Mud River, three miles inside of Fort Pulaski, and made a careful examination of both land and water for a mile or more, sounded the channels, and got exact knowledge of the entire region, including the obstruction of

Wall's Cut. With muffled oars I rowed silently about, at times within sound of the enemy's patrol boats and pickets, the men talking and shouting in perfect ignorance of our presence. It was an interesting experience. I was convinced that the Cut could be easily cleared of the sunken bark and the double row of piles across it, that New and Mud rivers could be used by our lighter gunboats to reach the Savannah behind Fort Pulaski, and that a battery could be erected on Venus Point to command the river within its range.

With the complete information I had gathered, I hurried to headquarters, walking the entire length of Hilton Head Island, nearly fourteen miles of dry sand, in four hours and a quarter. On the way back I carefully considered all the facts I had gathered and in presenting them to General Sherman I recommended an immediate move on Savannah by the route I had explored, expressing the opinion that four gunboats and a small brigade of infantry could easily take the place. Sherman was favorably impressed, but as the movement would require the coöperation of the navy, the most he could do was to send me back to superintend the removal of the obstructions and to show the navy the practicability of the route into the Savannah.

Lieutenant Colonel Beard of the Forty-eighth New York was told off to assist me, and, although he was a most vigorous officer, two weeks passed before he cleared the passage. All approaches were by water, and all the work had to be done on boats or on the marsh, and it was not only slow but trying. The regiment had already gained a good deal of notoriety from the fact that most of its officers were

Methodist ministers and class leaders, but this job overtaxed their piety. Beard, who was six feet tall, brawny, vigorous, and "bearded like a pard," was the first to fall from grace. In the midst of his work, while standing on a bit of corduroy, where the mud was particularly soft and deep and his men particularly slow, he was cursing louder and more voluminously than any pirate. In the midst of it all, Viele, his brigade commander, stepped up and, laying his hand on the colonel's shoulder, said: "Look here, Beard, are you a preacher, too?" Somewhat abashed at this unexpected question and gentle reminder, he replied: "Well, no, general, I can't say I'm a regularly ordained minister. I am one of your blankety-blank local preachers, that's the sort of preacher I am."

The answer brought a smile to Viele's handsome face, but seemed satisfactory as he passed on, while Beard, with a temporary lull in the violent language, renewed his efforts to finish the task. I regret to add that he soon fell again into the use of language which, however irreverent, did not fail to convince his men that he was in dead earnest.

During the delay in the completion of this work I made a reconnoissance up New River and across Hog Marsh to a point opposite the lower part of Savannah. I was accompanied by Mr. Badeau, afterward captain, lieutenant colonel, and brevet brigadier general of Grant's staff, at that time a reporter for the *New York Express*. He was a modest, slender, and delicate man of agreeable manners and high intelligence, and deservedly became a prime favorite with the staff. As he was always anxious to see things for himself, he was frequently my com-

panion. Beside him I had a corporal and four men as a guard. We had six or seven miles to row, and about three miles to wade through the marsh. Starting early, we reached the landing-place by sunrise, and, leaving our boat and crew concealed in a run by high reeds and guarded by two men, we made our toilsome way through the marsh to a point near fast land, from which we could see everything going on at the city water front. The rebel engineers were driving a row of piles across the river and seemed very busy with preparations to stand off the Yankees. Having spent several hours of observation, we ate our luncheon and started back, but flood tide was now on, the low places and the runlets were full of water, and the walking through the high reeds was most difficult. It was easy enough to keep the direction by a pocket compass, but before we had covered half the distance to the boat, Badeau became so completely exhausted that he could not even swing his legs to the front as we broke our way, carrying him bodily through the reeds. We had neither whisky nor brandy, and although it was midwinter we soon drank all the water in our canteens. It was exhausting work, tiresome to the corporal and myself, but killing to Badeau, who soon cried piteously for water and even for a morsel of tobacco, which none of us could furnish. As the tide rose the runlets became deeper and wider, and yet we crossed them at first easily enough; but before we reached the boat we were compelled more than once to swim a few strokes. Badeau begged us to leave him and save ourselves, but that was not to be thought of. With shoulders under his arms, we carried him in as far as we could wade. Then in

deep water the corporal, after getting a footing in a shallow place beyond, would grab our exhausted companion as I pushed him across. In this way we reached the boat by the middle of the afternoon and within an hour more my stalwart crew landed us safely at Viele's headquarters on Dawfuskie Island. After getting something to eat, I rowed to the end of the island, where my orderly and horse were waiting, and that night I reached headquarters with my information and a new recommendation for a dash at Savannah.

As before, it was necessary for the navy to co-operate. Sherman had no control, and hence I was sent back to Tybee to show the navy that my route was practicable. I arrived there with my cutter and crew January 17, and, after nightfall, accompanied by Captain John Rodgers and Lieutenant Barnes of the navy, I took them across the sound, steering by compass to the mouth of New River. As we approached the entrance we heard breakers through the darkness, at which my naval friends silently dropped their pistols, unbuckled their belts, kicked off their shoes, and stood up to throw off their coats, when I asked: "What's the matter?" They replied: "Breakers ahead—this boat will be swamped and we shall have to swim for it!"

Whereupon I turned to my negro coxswain and said: "Do you know this place?" He replied at once: "Just like de palm of my hand."

"Can you take her through?"

"Just as easy as falling off of a log."

"Take the tiller then and order the men to give way."

"Ay, ay, sir," and in a dozen strokes the boat

had leapt through the breakers, and was in water as smooth as a mill-pond. As it was my job thenceforward, my coxswain remained at the tiller, and before daylight we passed New River, Wall's Cut, Wright and Mud Rivers, into the Savannah, with a complete line of soundings which showed the route entirely practicable for the light gunboats and transports. Both officers concurred in the report, but Captain Rodgers finally declined to recommend the route for an expedition against Savannah, and hence after a week's additional delay the scheme was abandoned.

This plan was succeeded by a determination to isolate Fort Pulaski and then batter down its walls at our leisure. The first step to that end was the erection of a battery of siege guns on Venus Point to command the river behind and above the fort, and, as that point is several miles from fast land and can be reached by water only, the undertaking was regarded by many as impracticable. I had, however, reported in favor of it, and to show that I was not mistaken I volunteered to take the two leading guns across the marsh and put them in position. My offer was accepted and on the night of February 10 I showed conclusively that I was right. Landing in the marsh eight hundred yards by the shortest road from the point, I carried my guns forward on a series of short, movable runways made of heavy pine plank, two and a half inches thick, fourteen inches wide, and twenty-five feet long. With three sets of runways held in position by cross pieces, I carried the guns forward, plank by plank. As rapidly as the rear length was cleared it was moved around to the front, and thus the distance

was slowly but safely covered. A wheel occasionally slipped off and sank to the axle in the mud, but by the use of blocks and handspikes it was soon lifted out and replaced on the runway. It was a work of incredible difficulty, which those who have ever tried to cross a salt marsh will understand; but, nevertheless, I got my guns safely across and in position on the platform of the sandbag battery erected by the engineers by half-past two in the morning. Porter and Beard followed closely, each with two guns, and by sunrise we had six guns with a proper supply of ammunition ready to sweep the river effectively. As no enemy was yet in sight, the guns and epaulements were covered with reeds during the day, but the next morning, as Commodore Tatnall[1] and his Mosquito Fleet were coming down the river toward Pulaski, we held our fire till they got within close range, when we opened on them with our eight-inch guns, and not only halted them at once, but sent them scurrying back to the city. A corduroy road was laid to the battery and maintained, thus completely cutting off all communication by the Savannah till Pulaski itself was compelled to surrender.

Our operations were now transferred to Tybee Island as the base of a regular siege against Fort Pulaski, and I was sent to continue my explorations of the adjacent islands and waterways to the mainland. In an expedition with the Eighth Michigan as an escort we pushed our way across Whitmarsh Island to Thunderbolt Inlet, close to the cemetery on

[1] It was this officer who made himself famous a few years before by saying, "Blood is thicker than water," and going to the rescue of the English sailors who were struggling in the water on the Taku Bar, at the mouth of the Peiho, China.

the mainland near Savannah. After completing my sketches, we withdrew to our transport, but while calling in our rear guard we were fiercely attacked by a battalion of rebels that had followed us up closely. A sharp and bloody fight ensued, in which the adjutant of the regiment was shot through the head while standing so close that his blood and brains bespattered my face. We were in an open space surrounded by a hedge which the enemy had closed in upon, but, hastily deploying the reënforcements which came at once to our assistance, we turned the hedge and, taking the enemy in flank, drove him rapidly back a mile or more, and then withdrew and reëmbarked at our leisure. This was the first infantry fight I ever saw or participated in. I was struck by a musket ball, but, fortunately, my boot top turned the bullet aside, without leaving anything more than a severe bruise to remember it by. While the affair cost us quite a number of men, killed and wounded, it made a deep impression on my mind because of the great bravery and coolness displayed by the Michigan men and officers.

A few days later, while rowing through one of the creeks back of Tybee, I ran into a small boat and two men carrying mail to the fort, and, although I had neither arms nor armed men, I put on a bold face and confidently called out: "Halt, toss your oars, and surrender, or I'll open on you!" Much to my relief, they promptly complied, and as they came alongside I discovered that both had rifles. Their mail proved to be interesting, for it contained newspapers giving an account of the capture of Forts Henry and Donelson by the combined operations of Foote and Grant.

Shortly before commencing the siege of Pulaski, Sherman appointed Captain Gillmore a brigadier general subject to the approval of the Washington authorities, and directed Captain Hamilton, chief of artillery, to report to him; but Hamilton peremptorily declined on the legal ground that he was Gillmore's senior in actual rank, and that nobody but the President could ask or compel him to waive his rights and take orders from his junior. Hamilton was an officer of regular artillery, a man of parts and of acknowledged ability, and, what was more, he was perfectly sure of his ground. Sherman recognized his position, explained the necessity for more officers of rank, and asked Hamilton what he should do. The latter, after admitting all that the general said, coolly added: "I see no way out of the difficulty except for you to appoint me a major general and direct Gillmore to report to me. You have the same authority for that course as for what you have already done for Gillmore." The staff generally sympathized with Hamilton. Both he and Gillmore were able men and both served with distinction till the end of the war. Gillmore was not only confirmed as a brigadier, but became a major general and a corps commander, but Hamilton got no volunteer rank whatever.

Long before the *impasse* was dissolved, Sherman was relieved and sent to report to Halleck on the Tennessee River, while Major General David Hunter, accompanied by Brigadier General Benham, assumed command of the expeditionary corps. They were both regulars of age and distinction, but neither was in any way an improvement on Sherman. Gillmore was left free to com-

plete his batteries along the northeast side of Tybee, and after they were armed with heavy guns and mortars they opened fire on the fort about three-quarters of a mile away. Having volunteered my services, I was directed to supervise the batteries at Goat's Point.

General Hunter and staff arrived April 7, 1862, and at half-past five on the 9th I was sent with a four-oared boat under flag of truce to demand the surrender of the fort.

I had hardly taken my seat in the stern when General Benham, who outranked Gillmore, called out in a loud voice:

"Take your seat in the bow of the boat, Captain Wilson."

As I was only a lieutenant, I did not move.

"Take your seat in the bow of the boat, Major Wilson," came with greater emphasis.

Still I did not move.

"Take your seat in the bow of the boat, Lieutenant Colonel Wilson!"

Realizing finally that these orders were intended for me, I replied:

"All right, General, but you have my title all wrong. I am only a lieutenant."

"Never mind, sir, you shall have them all in due time. Meanwhile take your position in the bow of the boat so you can see better when you approach the island."

And this I did, though the precaution was an unnecessary one.

I was politely received by an officer, also under a flag of truce, who took my communication to the post commandant, returning shortly with a sealed reply,

declining to surrender. Of course, I learned nothing of value, for I was not permitted to pass the landing stage.

These formalities took an hour or more and then the reply had to be considered and communicated to Gillmore, with orders to reopen fire. In turn he had to send formal instructions to the battery commanders, which he entrusted to Badeau, who was now a captain and additional aid-de-camp. This was his first important duty and the great event of his life. Near-sighted, wearing spectacles, entirely unused to horses, and so awkward that he hardly knew how to buckle a trunk strap, he mounted a mile or so in the rear and galloped to the batteries. Porter's were the first he reached. Porter was standing by the side of a thirteen-inch mortar with everything ready when Badeau appeared. Jumping or half falling from his horse, he threw his reins over a pile of shells a few feet away and, rushing forward, called out: "Commence firing!" His order was instantly obeyed. The explosion shook the earth like a volcano. The shell rose gracefully like a black moon on its course, followed by a series of discharges from the other mortars, Columbiads, and breaching guns, and pandemonium seemed to have broken loose. Badeau's horse, frightened almost to death, broke madly away without attracting the slightest attention. Tradition has it that when last seen he was disappearing in the neighboring marsh, from which he never returned.

All through that day, the next, and the day after that till two o'clock the awful bombardment continued. The enemy replied bravely, but his fire was wild and did but little harm. By ten o'clock of the

third day a breach was opened in the thick granite wall of the fort and by noon another showed itself. Meanwhile, mortar shells were falling in the terreplein of the work, and at 2 P. M. Friday, April 11, the anniversary of Fort Sumter, the enemy struck his flag and orders went forth at once to cease firing. A practicable breach had been opened and the fort had become untenable after only seventeen hours of constant firing.

I was again detailed to accompany the party sent to arrange the terms of the surrender. The job was found to be a complete one, and as the fort was so horribly battered and so completely isolated that no one could escape, the surrender was made without terms or conditions.

This success gave us complete control of the river to within close range of Savannah, but it was followed by no important results. We lost no men and the enemy but few besides the prisoners.

Looking backward, it was a far less important and dangerous operation than we had thought it before we opened fire. The night our arrangements were all completed Porter and I slept but little. The positions assigned us were supposed to be quite as dangerous as any in the line of batteries. We naturally thought that one or both might be killed, and therefore made our wills, in which each agreed to act as executor to the other.

For the first hour after our guns opened we were somewhat nervous, but in watching the effects of our own shots we could plainly see those of the enemy coming toward us. It was the day of ten-inch smooth bore guns and low velocities, so that as soon as we saw the flash of the enemy's gun we caught sight

of the shot or shell coming our way and marked not only its flight, but guessed within a few feet where it would strike, whether it fell short or passed overhead. Fortunately our parapets and bomb-proofs were strong and gave us perfect protection. It must be confessed, however, that the enemy's practice was poor, and by the second day we had got so used to it that we did not hesitate to sit on a parapet or traverse, watching the shells coming toward us, till they got within a few rods, when we would jump down and take cover, or sit fast and allow them to pass over our heads.

After the surrender, instead of pushing into the interior with all our force by the Savannah or Broad River, one brigade under General Stevens made an ineffectual demonstration from Beaufort toward Pocotaligo, and then a dead calm fell upon the command. Many officers were granted leave of absence. General Benham claimed to be "straining at the leash" to get at the enemy, while Hunter was abolishing slavery by proclamation; but so far as I could see, an effective campaign from our base was just as far from realization under Hunter as under Sherman. These two generals were equally brave, equally patriotic, and equally incompetent. They were lacking in aggressiveness and initiative, and, fully realizing that the occupation of the sea islands was an abortive and wasteful use of the troops, I went to Hunter and frankly asked to be relieved and ordered to report to my chief at Washington for duty elsewhere. The general received me with both sympathy and kindness, but gave me no assurance of granting my request. He was a fine, gallant, and manly old fellow, but for the time he was more

interested in abolishing slavery than in putting down the rebellion. His adjutant, Charles G. Halpine, was a brilliant Irish newspaper man, who gained an evanescent distinction as Miles O'Reilly. He was a most agreeable, sympathetic fellow who wasted a good deal of time after the war in trying to get me interested in the Fenian movement to free his native land. Both he and Hunter advised me to be patient, and intimated rather mysteriously that they would give me enough to do before the summer was over.

I knew that they were calling on Washington for reënforcements and it did not take much guessing to hit on the fact that they had a movement against Charleston in their minds. But the development of their plans was too slow for me. Before the summer was over, we heard of the bloody battle of Shiloh and Halleck's great movement on Corinth. We knew also of McClellan's campaign against Richmond, and hence my anxiety to get away was constantly on the increase; but as Hunter gave me only vague promises, I pulled every string I could touch, and even applied to the adjutant general of the army, who returned my letter to be forwarded through the official channels.

Meanwhile, on June 2, Hunter and staff, with Wright's and Stevens' brigades, made a descent on Stono and James Island, near Charleston; but the movement was so badly combined and so languidly executed that it proved an ignominious failure. A few unimportant skirmishes and unsuccessful assaults on the rebel lines at Secessionville ended the movement in disgrace. Drunkenness on the part of the leading officers was openly charged. Benham

was arrested for disobedience of orders, relieved from command, and ordered North.

I had charge of a war balloon in this expedition and made several ascents, but as soon as the anchor rope became taut, the basket danced about so that I could see nothing distinctly. After due consideration I concluded that captive balloons were worthless for reconnoissance, and that neither expense nor time should be wasted in trying to utilize them. This is my opinion to the present day. Dirigible balloons and aeroplanes have become practicable and they can be efficiently used.

On my return to Hilton Head I dismounted and brought in more guns, and when that task was finished, I was detailed as the judge advocate of a general court-martial to try one of our colonels. The charges against him were shameless and promiscuous lying, with one hundred and twenty specifications. Having reduced these to ten or eleven, we tried and found him guilty on all the counts and sentenced him to dismissal; but the reviewing authority disapproved the proceedings and sentence and restored the officer to duty on the ground that the multiplicity of the counts looked like persecution. This officer served till the end of the war and was finally breveted brigadier general for the part played by him in what came to be designated long afterward as "the bloody battle of March 13, 1866," but it should be noted that he always had "the misfortune of being widely disbelieved."

The same court tried the quartermaster and commissary of a cavalry regiment for sanding the sugar, adulterating the pepper, making away with the forage, selling rations, and falsifying his returns and

accounts. He was convicted and, having no friends willing to plead for him, he was dismissed from the army. It was the only case of the kind I ever had anything to do with.

Thus June and July, 1862, passed slowly. Hunter had become greatly depressed by his failure, and in midsummer, when the weather was the hottest and the outlook most discouraging, the news came of McClellan's defeat on the Peninsula, accompanied by orders to send ten thousand of our troops to reënforce him.

Meanwhile, I was detailed as acting assistant inspector general of the command and directed to draw up a plan for rearranging the system of outposts and pickets, and a plan for breaking the railroad between Pocotaligo and Coosahatchie. This work kept me employed in a way, but with more than half our force and many of our officers absent, the prospect was far from encouraging. It was now more than ever evident that the occupation of the sea islands was a wasteful mistake which could not be repaired, and my anxiety became greater and greater. I had done my best to get away and was not without hope that accumulating disasters to our armies farther north, if neither my prayers nor the solicitations of my friends, would bring me the necessary orders for a change of station. Finally, August 26, I was made happy by orders from the war department directing me to report forthwith at Washington.

Thus ended the first year of my "active service." Although I had been at the head of my branch of service on the staff, had served in the Ordnance, Quartermaster's, and Inspector General's Depart-

ments, had helped the artillery, and had acted as judge advocate and also as the recorder of an examining board, I was far from satisfied. I had gained experience and confidence, but I was far from pleased with my work. I had done my best to encourage my commanding officers and to embolden them to push forward against the enemy, and while I had failed, it is pleasant to reflect that I had not made myself a nuisance nor lost their friendship. On the contrary, Sherman evidently thought I could do things, and when he was ordered west he requested that I be allowed to accompany him. While his request was denied, he wrote me frequently afterward, and we remained close friends till his death.

Hunter's good will was quite as unmistakable, for when he succeeded to the command of the Tenth Army Corps, he had me appointed assistant inspector general of that corps, with the rank of lieutenant colonel, and although I was then serving as an engineer officer on the staff of General Grant in the Department of the Tennessee, I was ordered to report to Hunter as soon as I could be spared.

In addition to the substantial promotion from lieutenant to lieutenant colonel, which came in time to give me the choice of remaining on the staff of General Grant as inspector general of his army with the same rank, my first campaign and my first year of active service in the field brought me the glory of repeated honorable mention in the reports of all of the general officers of the expeditionary corps, with whom I came in contact. General Hunter in his official report, after mentioning General Gillmore for his industry, skill, and patriotic zeal, was pleased to say of me: "Great credit is

due to his assistants, Lieutenant J. H. Wilson, U. S. Topographical Engineer, and Lieutenant Horace Porter of the Ordnance Department." Generals Benham, Viele, and Gillmore in their several reports also spoke of me and my services in kindly and complimentary terms.[1] So that while the expedition itself fell far short of its possibilities, it was for me an opportunity which "led on to fortune."

I add with unalloyed pleasure that the year was blessed by friendships with both army and navy men that lasted throughout life. Young as I was, I established close relations with Admiral DuPont, one of the most courtly and distinguished officers of his time, with John and Raymond Rodgers, Percival Drayton, Daniel Ammen, Napoleon Collins, John S. Barnes, and many of their juniors. Barnes was a peculiarly masterful man of great intelligence and splendid bearing. Strong, deep-chested, clear-eyed, bold, and resolute, he was a typical sailor, a graduate of the Naval Academy, who rendered valuable service till the end of the war, when he resigned, and in a few years amassed an ample fortune as a railroad projector, builder, and manager.

Gillmore of the Engineers was my senior by seven or eight years and, although he was an excellent officer of great learning, dignity, and reserve, with many military accomplishments, he extended to me his confidence and his intimacy. Our routes through life lay apart from the time I left Port Royal, but we touched again at the close of the war in Georgia where he occupied the coast with a corps

[1] O. R., Series I, Vol. VI, pp. 134, 138, 142, 146, 150, 152, 153, 157, 160.

See, also, Vol. XIV, pp. 5, 6, 8, 9, 326.

of infantry while I occupied the interior with the Cavalry Corps, Military Division of the Mississippi.

Our chief commissary, Captain M. R. Morgan, was an officer of character and ability, who rose to high rank and distinction after his career had been almost wrecked by confinement to the duty of feeding the troops when he should have been leading them to victory. The same may be said in substantially the same words of John W. Turner, formerly of the regular artillery, who stopped at Port Royal with General Butler on his way to New Orleans. He wasted at least two years in duties which might have been as well performed by any intelligent grocer, but finally broke the shackles that bound him and reached the rank of major general before the war ended. The Military Academy never turned out two better soldiers. Modest, serious, accomplished, and experienced in every branch of the military profession, they needed only an opportunity to show their patriotism and their merits. Their cases, as well as many others, show how utterly uninformed the War Department was as to the record and character of its officers and how entirely it failed to organize an efficient system of making itself acquainted with their particular aptitude and merits. When all this is considered, the reader will be slow to condemn those officers who went out of their way to seek service in the hope that they might not only make themselves useful, but find rank and honor.

III

ANTIETAM CAMPAIGN

Return to Washington—McClellan's staff—South Mountain—Battle of Antietam—Hooker wounded—Pleasant Valley—Return to Washington.

I sailed for Philadelphia on the *Augusta*, formerly a merchantman, August 30. Her machinery was so out of order that she came into Port Royal at seven miles an hour, but when she started north for repairs she easily knocked off twelve or thirteen; but with all, we were four days on the way, and I did not reach Washington till eight o'clock September 5. While the new general-in-chief received me politely, I was not expected and no orders were ready for me. I had read Halleck's "Art of War", and was ready to believe him not only a learned man, but a mighty captain. Great victories had been gained and great disasters had been averted in his western command. Belmont, Fort Henry, Fort Donelson, Shiloh, and Corinth had been won, and while Grant was popularly regarded as the principal figure, Halleck was his titular chief, and in common with many others I was disposed to give him a great part of the credit. He had already received the sobriquet of "Old Brains", but when I beheld

his bulging eyes, his flabby cheeks, his slack-twisted figure, and his slow and deliberate movements, and noted his sluggish speech, lacking in point and magnetism, I experienced a distinct feeling of disappointment which from that day never grew less. I could not reconcile myself to the idea that an officer of such negative appearance could ever be a great leader of men. He might be a great lawyer, a great student, a great theorist, but never an active, energetic, and capable commander in the field, and that is now the verdict of history. For several years some thought him a wise and self-reliant counsellor, a good military organizer, and a far-seeing strategist; but long before the war ended he came to be regarded by close observers, and especially by the Secretary of War, as a negligible quantity.

He was obliging and considerate with me and readily enough gave me permission to look about for a regiment, but that was the end of it. So far as I knew, he took no further interest in my career. I saw him but once after that, nor had I anything further to do with him, except that two years later, when relieved from charge of the Cavalry Bureau, the Secretary of War, at my suggestion, directed him to take general supervision of its administration along with his other duties as chief-of-staff to which position he had finally been reduced.

Leaving his office, I went at once to my bureau chief, and had a similar experience—plenty of civility, lots of sympathy, but no orders. I was again asked where I wanted to go and what I wanted to do. Engineer officers were in great demand and, as there were but few of them, I might have my choice of places. The principal assistant evidently wanted

to help me. He had read my letters and reports with interest and approval and did his best to place me where I should have a fair field for my energies, but he was powerless himself to make orders or to direct my services. He said that Grant had no engineer officer whatever, that he was calling loudly for as many as could be spared and that I could doubtless go to him if I saw nothing better. Whereupon I replied that I preferred to go to Grant rather than to anyone else, that my brothers and my western friends were in his army, and that my interests and my inclinations lay in that direction.

But the country was in the midst of a great crisis. McClellan had been beaten and withdrawn from the James River. Pope and McDowell had just been overthrown by Lee at Bull Run and Chantilly, and, although both Fitz-John Porter and Franklin had reached the scene of conflict, the two armies had not been entirely united in front of Washington. In fact both were still retiring and, on the day I arrived, they began to pass through Washington into Maryland for the purpose of again confronting the victorious Confederates.

A great campaign was on, great battles were pending and, of course, I wanted to participate. I therefore asked that I might be ordered definitely to Grant, but permitted to volunteer temporarily on McClellan's staff. And thus the matter was arranged. The next step was to find interest with McClellan, who had again become all-powerful. Fortunately, Major Hardie, one of my friends and companions in the long trip from Vancouver, had a desk in the adjutant general's office and kindly offered to see McClellan at once and, if possible, to get

permission for me to join him. What difficulty he had I never knew, but the second morning thereafter I received orders to report to McClellan at or beyond Rockville. The post quartermaster furnished me with a horse, and, hastily gathering up such equipment and supplies as I needed, I took the road for headquarters with Martin and Custer who were also out for service.

Both Martin and I had known Custer well at West Point. He was an indifferent scholar, but a fellow of tremendous vitality and vigor. Six feet tall, with broad shoulders, deep chest, thin waist, and splendid legs, he had a perfect figure and was one of the best horsemen of his day. He had gone straight from the Academy to McClellan on the Peninsula where he had already shown himself to be a man of enterprise and daring, ready for any service that came his way. He was known in his cadet days and always afterward by his familiars as "Cinnamon", because he was partial to cinnamon hair oil, a bottle of which he brought with him to West Point. Shortly after reporting at army headquarters, the story goes, McClellan advanced to the south bank of the Chickahominy attended by a numerous staff of princes, counts, rich men, and distinguished regulars. Custer, then merely a plebe second lieutenant, was at the tail of the column. The general, after gazing with interest at the stream, which was both full and wide, said reflectively: "I wish I knew how deep it is." Of course, none of the great ones stirred, but as the question trickled slowly toward the rear, Custer caught its import, left his place in ranks, pushed to the river bank, drove his spurs into his horse, and plunged

into the water with the remark: "I'll damn soon show how deep it is." In less time than it takes to tell it, he was swimming for the other shore. Reaching it shortly, he turned about and swam back, and as he came ashore he called out: "That's how deep it is, General," and then took his place quietly in the column. It was that sort of readiness and hardihood which soon won his stars, giving him first a brigade and then a division of cavalry, which in turn made him within three years one of the most distinguished men of his day. Custer was never rated as a great general, for, although full of dash, enterprise, and experience, he never acquired the habit of properly measuring the endurance of his men and horses. Besides, some thought him overconfident and occasionally jealous, and it was those two great defects of character that led to the final and fatal blunder which ended his brilliant career. It will be recalled that several years after the Civil War before going into battle with the Sioux Indians he divided his regiment into two detachments, sending four troops in one direction, leading the remainder himself against the Indians in the other. In the desperate battle which followed, he and all his companions, to the last man, were slain.

But during the Antietam campaign, Custer was the youngest officer of the staff, scarcely more than a boy. We overtook headquarters the first day out, and with Merritt, Bowen, Kellogg, and Jack Wilson, all young West Pointers, we formed a mess and soon became known as a hard-working, hard-riding gang ready for any service that might come our way. McClellan was kind to us, one and all, and by his genial and gentle ways won our hearty

approval and support from the start. While he spared none of us, he directed Ingalls, the chief quartermaster, to keep us supplied with fresh mounts so that we might go whenever called upon. By the end of the week we had a string of twenty-five horses, all about the best that the country could supply. We were a jolly and cheerful party, all of whom except myself had been with the Army of the Potomac since its organization. They had gone with it to the Peninsula and had participated creditably in all the battles of the campaign. Jack Wilson had particularly distinguished himself, commanding a battery during the retreat to the James River.

Bowen and Merritt had been behind the scenes on the staff, and as they were both able and observant men they were already veterans who needed only the experience of commanding troops to make them famous. This privilege came to Merritt and Custer a few months later when Pleasanton selected them to command cavalry brigades because they were well-educated, young, vigorous, intelligent, and enterprising.

But none of us was thinking much of death or even of fame at that time. We were in the midst of a great campaign, the significance of which we all understood quite as well as the wisest general, and our highest desire was for active and useful duty. Those of us who were engineers were kept going night and day, reconnoitering and scouting. Bowen and I, assisted by the French Count de Vilarceau, while operating on the left toward Crampton's Gap and Catoctin Mountain, passed through Damascus, Hyattsville, Goshen, Urbanna, Middletown, Fred-

erick, and Keedysville, scouring the country in all directions for the enemy.

It was on September 10 that General Hartsuff, one of my West Point instructors, offered me the command of the Sixteenth Maine, which I promptly accepted, and my name was sent in to Halleck for the detail. But neither the detail nor the commission ever came, mainly, as I always supposed, because the governor of the state did not know me or thought me too young. Two days thereafter I received, through Colonel Fisher, an offer of the lieutenant colonelcy of the First Delaware Cavalry, but with a colonelcy pending I could not accept a lower grade. I had, besides, telegraphed and written to the Governor of Illinois on my arrival at Washington offering my services with the volunteers, and, not hearing from him, I was somewhat embarrassed as to the course I ought to pursue. Meanwhile I was leading a "strenuous life", though I did not know it, for that adjective did not come into fashion till many years afterward. Riding all day with a detachment of cavalry and living off of the country which was bountifully laden with supplies, I found both villagers and farmers not only patriotic, but everywhere hailing the Union flag with enthusiasm. Their hospitality and good cheer were unstinted. Camping when night overtook us where we could find forage, we sent our information and sketches by courier to the acting chief engineer, Major Duane, without relaxing our advance in search of the enemy. It soon became evident that Lee was retreating, and when Pleasanton with the cavalry, guided by us and supported by Cox, Reno, Burnside, and Hooker, pushed him along the turnpike through

the Gap, we knew that we should soon overtake his army and have a great battle.

At the crossing of the main road over the Catoctin Ridge, after a good deal of hesitation and delay with some successful skirmishing, both Pleasanton and Reno sent reports to McClellan claiming a "glorious victory," before any real fight had actually occurred. Fearing that McClellan might be misled thereby, Bowen and I, after suggesting that more troops should be put in, wrote a "private and confidential" note to Duane at general headquarters, urging that McClellan himself should come to the front. We intimated that he was being deceived, that the enemy occupied a position of great strength on the top of the ridge, and that we might be beaten unless our advance were made with an overwhelming force. It was a bold proceeding on the part of two lieutenants, but it brought about the desired result. Duane showed our note to McClellan, who mounted his horse and rode rapidly to the site of our operations. Upon this occasion at least he acted with both promptitude and vigor. Taking in the situation within fifteen minutes after reaching the ground, he sent orders to Hooker and Sumner which put them in motion and brought on the fight at once. Moving all together, they drove the enemy from behind the stone fences in the Gap with great slaughter. The victory was a signal and encouraging one. It was here that I first saw infantry attacking after nightfall. The flash of the rebel rifles lit the mountain side like fireflies, but when Gibbon's serried line poured out its volleys from its front like continuous streaks of lightning and kept steadily on without wavering or faltering till it had crowned

the ridge, we knew the victory was surely ours. Shortly afterward news came from Franklin at Crampton's Gap, four miles south on the Berkitsville road, that he had also been successful, and this made it certain that we were in contact with Lee's rear guard, and should soon have a general battle.

Near the scene of conflict on the principal route when the affair was over, Bowen and I took shelter in a farmhouse. The nights were growing cold. We had neither overcoats nor camp outfit, and, as all the beds were occupied by officers of higher rank, we slept on the floor with law books for pillows. Before morning, however, as it grew more chilly, we half unconsciously tore up and crawled under the carpet for warmth, and when we got out in the morning we were as white as millers. In those days we did not mind a little thing like that, and dusting each other off as best we could, and grabbing such food as we could find, we swung into our saddles again and pushed on toward Antietam and Sharpsburg. We had been in the field for just a week, and while we had been zigzagging through the country at the rate of thirty and forty miles a day, we naturally thought the army in the rear was pushing on as impatiently as we were. We had, however, met McClellan first at Rockville on the 8th and had passed Burnside on the road only a few miles further out, apparently in no sort of a hurry. He was sitting by the roadside, and hailed us as we rode by with a jolly "How are you, boys? Get down and wet your whistles." But we were in a hurry and pressed to the front. From this trivial circumstance and from the fact that our couriers were generally a long while absent, it gradually dawned on us that

the progress of the army as a whole, averaging only seven or eight miles a day, was far from rapid. Evidently no part of it was making forced marches, and this, to our youthful and ardent minds, was most discouraging.

But it had not occurred to us yet to doubt McClellan. So far he appeared to be not only more aggressive, but more active, than any of his lieutenants. He was again the popular favorite and the army as well as its officers of every grade still regarded him as "The Young Napoleon" of the War. His promptitude in coming to the front at the first clash of arms had encouraged us. It had strengthened the dim far-off hope that his orderly and comprehensive mind might be working out a splendid combination of strategy and grand tactics which would enable us to crush and perhaps capture Lee's army, and thus put an end to the war. We had early come to believe that Lee's forces were divided, and to hope, as we had been taught, that we should overtake and beat them in detail. But this was not to be. Our movements were too slow and too circumspect, and yet "strategy, my boy," was the catchword of the day. After we crossed South Mountain and the Catoctin range, we thought that Harper's Ferry might be our destination, knowing that our garrison at that place lay within the enemy's theater of operations and was necessarily in danger. McClellan, so far as we could see, instead of hastening our march, advanced with still greater deliberation. Harper's Ferry was in everybody's mind and on everybody's tongue, but, instead of coming to it, it seemed to grow more and more distant, so that in the end as we rode by the slowly

moving columns, the common soldiers in the ranks would cry out: "Who in the hell is Harper, and where's his ferry?"

On the morning of September 10 we rejoined general headquarters, and one of the first things we heard there was the news of the capture by Stonewall Jackson of Harper's Ferry and its garrison of twelve thousand men, yet McClellan did not seem to be disturbed. Calm and deliberate, he spent the entire day (Sept. 16) forming line of battle astride of Antietam Creek and "shelling the woods" beyond. Bowen and I were kept busy until after nightfall reconnoitering the field and placing the troops in position. But nobody seemed to be in a hurry except ourselves. Corps and divisions moved as languidly to the places assigned them as if they were getting ready for a grand review instead of a decisive battle. I had got from the books the idea that everything, after we were within reach of the enemy, should be bustle and push and rapid marching; but again I was disappointed, and when night came on without anything more serious than a little skirmishing, I lay down tired and discouraged. My confidence in the military virtues of "celerity and audacity" was beginning to fade, and it was dawning on me that, while we should probably win, we should win by "main strength and awkwardness," rather than by strategy or generalship. And with that thought uppermost in my mind I went to sleep in my clothes, ready for a call at any minute.

At early dawn (Sept. 17) all were astir. The weather was fine but the air was hazy with the smoke of our camp fires. At six o'clock cannonading began, but even before that, far away on the right, Hooker

had anticipated the initial movement from the center, as if he hoped to win the battle without help, and thus monopolize the honors of the day. Receiving a slight wound in the foot, shortly after beginning his advance, he left the field without making any serious impression on the enemy's line, and was soon followed by many of his men.

Sumner's splendid corps of over thirty thousand was ordered to move at seven o'clock, but did not cross the Antietam till nearly ten. He claimed that he had not actually been ordered to attack, but merely "to hold himself in readiness to move." But when he did attack, it was by "divisions in echelon" instead of in a line of proper columns. But from McClellan's headquarters it was a thrilling sight. With flags flying and the long unfaltering lines rising and falling as they crossed the rolling fields, it looked as though nothing could stop them, but they were checked before getting within close range of the rebel rifles. The interval between echelons was too great and their flanks were too much exposed. Shortly the whole corps became disordered and not only lost its impulse, but fell back in confusion to the open fields, where it found sheltering swales pretty well out of range.

About eleven o'clock, perhaps a little later, Franklin, with Baldy Smith's and Couch's divisions, arrived on the same field and advancing gallantly to the attack, checked the confusion and restored confidence to the ranks which had advanced against stone walls in vain.

Fitz-John Porter with the Fifth Corps, composed of one division of regulars and two of volunteers, occupied the left center. As this formidable force,

regarded as the flower of the army, received no orders to advance, it stood fast all day, taking no real part in the battle. For all the good it did it might as well have been at Frederick or in Washington.

Still farther to the left Burnside, with a full army corps moving on the Keedysville road, was expected to force his way across the gorge of the lower Antietam which was justly regarded as impassable except by the bridge; but instead of carrying the bridge and getting into line on the other side before eleven, as was expected, Burnside's first attempt was weak and irresolute, and without positive results.

Thus it will be seen that long before noon McClellan's disjointed and badly timed attacks against the enemy's compact line had come to naught, and the fortunes of the day were trembling in the balance. Notwithstanding McClellan claimed then and always afterward that his plan of battle was masterly, he had committed the unpardonable blunder of camping his army part on one side and part on the other side of the Antietam, thus making it exceedingly difficult for his different corps to move simultaneously and entirely impossible to engage the enemy at the same time.

The force of this criticism becomes apparent when it is remembered that, notwithstanding repeated orders, the last of which I carried in person, Burnside did not succeed in forcing his way across the Antietam till three o'clock in the afternoon. His efforts throughout the morning had been weak and abortive, but he finally found in Colonel Kingsbury of the Eleventh Connecticut Volunteers the right man for the work in hand.

This superb young colonel, less than a year out of West Point, had recently given hostages to fate; but neither Cæsar nor Napoleon ever had a better soldier or a more fearless man for a desperate undertaking. He had graduated fourth in a notable class and had served first with a battery of artillery where he finally won his regiment. He was a distinguished scholar and an accomplished athlete, mentally and physically a perfect soldier. A judicious disciplinarian, an accomplished tactician, and a careful, considerate instructor, he was now fairly launched on a career which nothing but death could terminate in failure. His father, an old officer of the army, had been fortunate enough at an early day to become the owner of a large tract of land at the government price in what is now the center of Chicago, and which he is said to have sold frequently, but being too lazy to make the deed, held till death, when it descended to his son and daughter, the wife of Simon Bolivar Buckner. Having gone south with her husband and fearing confiscation, Mrs. Buckner conveyed her interests unconditionally, so far as the deed itself was concerned, but really in trust, to her brother. The latter, fearing that complications might arise in case of his death, the night before the battle sent for two of his friends of the regular army to witness his will, but they were busy or did not get his message and consequently did not act as witnesses. Whether he actually drew the will or made an authoritative declaration I never knew, but the next day he fell with a mortal wound while leading his regiment successfully across the Stone Bridge. Burnside won, but the gallant Kingsbury lost forever. In due

course a posthumous son was born to him. After the peace this son and the Kingsbury estate were involved for years in one of the most remarkable lawsuits of the period with General Buckner and his wife, who after great expense finally secured the rights which a few lines written by Kingsbury and witnessed by his friends on the eve of battle would have freed forever from controversy.

But to return to the battle. During the interval between the failure of Hooker and Sumner and of the partial but belated success of Burnside, McClellan and his staff were fearful of the result. For four hours it was a question which army should first assume the offensive. While we still had at hand something like twenty thousand men who had not fired a shot, and while there was plenty of daylight to fight another battle, McClellan, under the timid counsels of his subordinates, still "dared not . . . put it to the touch and win or lose it all!"

And thus it stood till Burnside was at last on the farther side of the creek. I had already ridden the whole line of battle more than once and reported its shaky condition to McClellan who, on receiving word of Burnside's sadly delayed but encouraging success, sent me again to the right to tell Sumner "to get up his men and hold his position at all hazards, as Burnside had crossed and was advancing finely." Riding a slashing gray as active as a deer, stone fences were nothing to me. I covered the ground going and coming in less than thirty minutes, including stops and delays.

I found Sumner glum and grim, surrounded by his staff and several division commanders, and, so far as I could judge, with but little or no fight left

in him. I delivered my orders at once, but instead of answering in a cheery and confident tone, he sang out:

"Go back, young man, and ask General McClellan if I shall make a simultaneous advance with my whole line at the risk of not being able to rally a man on this side of the creek if I am driven back."

As nothing had been said about an advance, I replied:

"General, from the tenor of the order I have just delivered, I will assume to say that General McClellan simply desires and expects you to hold your position for the present."

At this the general repeated:

"Go back, young man, and bring an answer to my question."

Whereupon I galloped to headquarters and delivered Sumner's message as above, to which McClellan retorted in sharp and impatient tones:

"Tell General Sumner to risk nothing. I expect him to hold his present position at every cost. This is the great battle of the war and every man must do his duty."

And then, as if changing his mind, he added:

"Tell the general to crowd every man and gun into ranks, and, if he thinks it practicable, he may advance Franklin to carry the woods in front, holding the rest of the line with his own command, assisted by those of Banks and Hooker."

And this order was delivered with emphasis in the exact terms it had been given to me and at the spot where I had found the group before. Franklin, Smith, Howard, Newton, Gibbon, Gorman, and

several others were standing by, apparently listening for what was to be said.

I had hardly got through with my message, when Sumner returned to the subject, saying:

"Go back, young man, and tell General McClellan I have no command. Tell him my command, Banks' command and Hooker's command are all cut up and demoralized. Tell him General Franklin has the only organized command on this part of the field!"

Of course, there was nothing for me but to return to headquarters with this discouraging message, and I am bound to add that in my judgment it indicated a demoralized state of mind, if not a demoralized state of affairs, for the only general whom I met on that ride who sounded a different note was General French, to whom, as I rode by, I hastily said: "McClellan's orders are to hold your position at all hazards," and instantly the bluff, hearty, red-faced old regular called out: "Tell him, by God, sir, I'll do it!"

When I got back I found headquarters in charge of Fitz-John Porter, who received my report without comment. He was as glum and apparently as lacking in aggressive temper as any general on the field. McClellan, having had reports from others as to the unpromising condition of affairs, had gone in person to the right to see for himself. I had no conversation with him on his return, but do not doubt that he was discouraged by his ride, as he gave no orders for the resumption of hostilities that afternoon.

During the day I rode the whole line from the center to both flanks several times. One of the sad-

dest incidents of the morning was the death of the veteran Mansfield who had fallen mortally wounded, while leading his men into action. With snow-white hair and martial bearing, he was as knightly a figure as ever gave up his life for the country, and his fall, which soon became known, was regarded as a serious loss to the entire army.

Next to Sumner's right I found Meade with the Pennsylvania "Bucktails", badly scattered and with but little aggressive temper left. A short distance farther on I came to Hooker's front and was amazed to find that both Hooker and the greater part of his corps had disappeared from the field, leaving no sort of an organization to hold the ground they had gained near the Dunkard Church and beyond. Indeed, the whole right center and extreme right of our line were so shattered and discouraged by the morning's disjointed work that I did not hesitate, young and inexperienced as I was, to say to McClellan that he should not only order his corps and division commanders to get all their men back into line, but send reënforcements and direct them as soon as possible to move vigorously against the enemy's position. I felt the importance of assuming the offensive first, because I was sure that if the enemy should anticipate us, he would sweep our entire right wing from the field. Even at that late hour I do not doubt that if Lee could have rallied and concentrated enough men to make an aggressive return against our right wing, he would have won the day. But, fortunately, his men were also used up and content to stand at bay till night put an end to the conflict.

Shortly after returning from my first ride to

Hooker, George W. Smalley, war correspondent of the *New York Tribune,* joined the group of officers near the headquarters flag. Knowing that he had been on that part of the field all morning, I asked him where Hooker was. He was the only corps commander I had not found near the line of battle, and, having heard that he had been but slightly wounded, it occurred to me that it would be a most timely and inspiring thing if he would go back to the front. He had already won the nickname "Fighting Joe", and was known as a most ambitious man, and it flashed through my mind that he would jump at the suggestion. So when Smalley pointed out the red brick house about a mile and a half to the right and rear, where Hooker had established himself, without the slightest suggestion from anyone else but entirely on my own account I said:

"Smalley, ride rapidly to Hooker and tell him to rally his corps and lead it back to the field, for by doing so he may not only save the day, but save the Union also!"

Smalley's horse was bleeding from a bullet wound, his hair was disheveled, and his clothes were covered with dust. He replied: "That's splendid, and I'll go at once, but I fear Hooker is too severely wounded to mount his horse."

I sang out:

"That makes no difference. Let him get into an ambulance and drive back to the field. Or, what is still better, put him on a stretcher, and with his bugles blowing and his corps flag flying over him, let his men carry him back to the fighting line, while his staff take the news to the division and brigade commanders."

Smalley, realizing that the part assigned him would not only be regarded as heroic and whatever the result would make him famous, dashed away at a gallop, calling out confidently: "Hooker will go back. I'll answer for it!" But in less than half an hour, Smalley rejoined us, looking discouraged and dejected. It was evident, without a word of explanation, that he had failed in his mission, and when questioned, he replied: "Hooker says he can't go back—his foot is too painful."

When it is remembered that the bullet which wounded him passed between his boot sole and the hollow of his foot, and that he walked on it without crutches within ten days, it will be seen that "Fighting Joe" had but little of the fortitude and none of the heroism which are so necessary to a great leader. From that day forth I regarded him as possessing but little real merit.

With the fight taken out of our army, all our corps commanders disheartened, and absolutely nothing done by any of them after Burnside had failed to press the enemy's right near Sharpsburg, we were still greatly encouraged at nightfall by finding the army still in possession of the field of battle. When it is recalled that Porter's corps added to the divisions of Reynolds and Humphreys with twenty thousand fresh men would give us not less than thirty thousand troops who had not yet fired a shot, we felt confident that a vigorous attack next morning would give us success all along the line. We were told and, of course, believed, that orders had been issued for an advance of the entire army at daylight, and in that belief we slept that night literally on our arms. Up at dawn and straining

our ears to hear the opening guns, we mounted and were ready for orders when word came that every corps commander except Meade had protested, claiming that his troops "were too much cut up" to renew the action that day. To his never-ending shame, McClellan yielded and gave out word that there would be no more fighting till the 19th. When that day came the enemy had gone, leaving us the slender consolation that the field was ours. The enemy had used the rest under cover of night to recross the Potomac with all his impedimenta.

McClellan, instead of pursuing hot-foot, contented himself with claiming a great victory, reoccupying Harper's Ferry and then settling down to rest and repair damages. My diary for the period is full of notes and reflections, which show that the course adopted made me heartsick and despondent; but as this is neither a history nor a military treatise, I conclude with the statement that, as soon as I realized that the campaign was ended, I asked to be relieved from further duty with that army and ordered back to Washington. McClellan at once granted my request and taking leave of my messmates, in Pleasant Valley at nightfall, mounted on my big gray, I covered the entire distance of about seventy-five miles by sunrise the next morning.

IV

INTERVIEW WITH McCLELLAN

Halleck's Headquarters—General McClernand—Pleasant Valley—Interview with McClellan—Washington—Ordered to Grant.

Arriving at Halleck's headquarters early September 28, I received a chilly welcome, due, as I soon learned, to the fact that I had delayed my departure to the West longer than had been expected. Although both Cullum, chief-of-staff, and my bureau chief had given me permission to volunteer on McClellan's staff for the campaign, the former now let fall the unexpected intimation that I might be "dismissed for absence without leave." This was more than I could stand, and called forth the hot and indignant reply:

"Tell General Halleck to dismiss me if he thinks proper, but in doing so let him reflect that he will dismiss me for the most useful service of my life so far."

Of course the storm soon blew over. As I had been regularly summoned to return to Pleasant Valley as a witness before a court-martial, I had several days' delay, which I passed mostly with General Hunter and General McClernand, tempo-

rarily in Washington. It was during conversation with the latter that he explained the business which brought him there. The West had begun already to call loudly for the capture of Vicksburg and the opening of the Mississippi so that it might (in the phrase of the day) "flow unvexed to the sea", and he had come on for the purpose of getting authority to organize and command an expedition for that purpose. As a townsman and neighbor of the President and as an influential Democrat who had greatly distinguished himself both at Donelson and Shiloh, he was listened to with favor. Grant at that time was more or less under a cloud, and this made it easier for McClernand, who was far from friendly to him.[1] Indeed, he was the first person I ever heard speak positively of Grant's bad habits as a factor in the case. He had formed a project for taking Vicksburg and operating eastward from that place, as a base, against the interior railroads and centers of the Confederacy. His proposition was to raise twelve thousand new troops in the Northwest, which with his old division he thought would be sufficient for the preliminary operations. Successful in capturing the rebel stronghold, he counted confidently on an augmented command, if not upon a department of his own.

Having fully explained his project and received the President's approval, he not only asked for my views, but offered me an important place on his staff. He was a forcible and interesting man and seemed to have but little doubt of success. His central idea was sound and in that I agreed fully; but I pointed out that as Vicksburg was the point

[1] O. R.—Shiloh, Series 1, Vol. X, part I, p. 114.

of the greatest strategic importance in the western theater of operations, the government could not afford to let its capture be made a side issue or a secondary operation—that it would be compelled to concentrate all its efforts in that direction, and that while the campaign should not start with less than fifty thousand or sixty thousand men and a strong gun-boat fleet, eighty thousand or ninety thousand with a large proportion of cavalry and artillery would be probably necessary for effective operations after Vicksburg had been secured. I pointed out that in this case Halleck would probably be against him and in favor of giving Grant, who was already commanding the department containing the base of operations, the chief command. This had evidently not occurred to him, but I gave him my views frankly on every aspect of the case as I then saw it because he asked for them. He did not tell me his final conclusions further than that Stanton as well as the President would support him, and with that assurance he started West to organize the new troops and complete his arrangements. That he finally realized that Halleck was against him and would probably beat him there can be but little doubt. Before leaving he renewed his invitation that I should go with him, to which I replied that having already received my orders to report to Grant, I could not ask to have them changed, adding, however, that my duty was to go where I was ordered, and that I should doubtless be on the ground when he got there.

During our conversations he explained the President's disappointment at McClellan's failure to destroy Lee's army at Antietam, and to follow him

up promptly after his retreat. He then said the President had early made up his mind to relieve McClellan from command and was delaying merely to select the proper general as his successor. Knowing that I was going back to the army as a witness, he specially requested me to give McClellan this information. I was asked to lay before him the project of capturing Vicksburg and operating eastward, with the suggestion that he should seek for the united command of the Mississippi valley and with the assurance that the entire military strength of the Northwest should be at his back.

I arrived again at Pleasant Valley early on October 16, and after vainly requesting Colburn of the staff for an interview with the general, I met the latter shortly afterward by chance coming from breakfast to his tent. Making my salute and receiving a polite good morning, I said at once: "I am just up from Washington and have a message for you." At this he invited me into his tent, where I continued without further preface:

"General, my friend, General McClernand, has requested me to say that the views expressed in the conversation he had with you while here a few days ago are in every way confirmed; you are to be removed from command; the authorities are only waiting for the man, and General Halleck is at the bottom of it. How General McClernand knows all this he said it was not necessary to state, but his closing words were: '*I know it!*' "

To this McClellan replied without apparent emotion:

"Yes, I expected it."

After taking a seat, I pointed out briefly on the map McClernand's plan of operations, adding:

"In view of the importance of this undertaking and of the tenacity with which Vicksburg will doubtless be defended, the vast benefit of its capture, the conflicting interests in the Mississippi Valley arising from a multiplicity of commands, and of the absolute necessity that all the military operations in that theater should be conducted toward the achievement of the one grand object, General McClernand thinks you should seek supreme command in the West, and that you should put your friends to work to secure it for you." I added: "I think they could succeed because I believe the administration will be willing to compromise with you by giving you this new command."

McClellan's eyes brightened, and instantly grasping the idea, he said:

"This is a suggestion that never occurred to me. I will give it due consideration, but"—his face growing serious again—"they will never give me such a command if they remove me from my present one, and, indeed, I doubt if I would accept any other. The Army of the Potomac is my army as much as any army ever belonged to the man that created it. We have grown together and fought together. We are wedded and should not be separated."

To this I replied:

"Yes, General, but your friends and the country regard you as 'wedded' to a higher cause than that of any army—the cause of the country and of the Union under the Constitution. They will expect you, not only to retain your commission, but to ac-

cept any service offered appropriate to your rank. Moreover, we are all below the law and all owe the common debt of military service; they will expect you not only to seek command, but to take any that may be offered you. Pardon me, General, if I add —if they don't give you an army, you should take an army corps or even a division. If they will not give you a division, were I in your place, I should ask for a brigade. If they deny that, I should resign and go back to my state and raise a regiment. If I couldn't get a colonelcy, I should take any other position open to me, and failing a commission, I should take my musket and go out as a private soldier. If you act on that principle, you will not only succeed, but you will be the next President of the United States!"

In reply to this presumptuous speech, which certainly arrested his attention without offending him, he thanked me for what I had said, declared that no one had talked that way to him before, and assured me that he would give it all careful consideration. We then fell into a general conversation, during which he told me of his opposition to the division of his army into army corps and the assignment of commanders before they had developed their merits. He explained his protest against the recall of his army from the Peninsula, recounted the important services it had just rendered, dwelt with bitterness upon the failure of the staff departments to send him the supplies which were necessary to enable him to continue the offensive, and claimed that all this should have been done within a week after the battle of Antietam. He did not fail to indicate his disappointment at the lack of

zeal on the part of Sumner, Fitz-John Porter, and others, nor to point out that their cases fitly illustrated the importance of promotion to high command for military merit, vigor, and efficiency, rather than for seniority.

His whole attitude was undoubtedly one of resentment and animosity against the government and the politicians. Wrapped in the mantle of his own injuries, he had no word for the country's claims or for the duties of the hour. He thanked me for the frankness with which I had spoken, and, after asking me to go with him should he have another assignment, he closed the conversation by saying:

"Tell my friends if they have anything to communicate to me to do it by a personal messenger or by letter sent by private, reliable conveyance; trust nothing to the mail—my letters are opened and read."

This interview produced a lasting impression upon my mind. While the General's self-poise was remarkable and his general demeanor that of an able and observant man, I was disagreeably impressed by one peculiarity—that of smiling spasmodically and unmeaningly after each important or significant remark. Although at that time in the full vigor of middle life, firm and erect in bearing, handsome of eye and face, deep-chested and strong-limbed, well set up and well clad and apparently in perfect health—the beau ideal of a regular soldier—he did not impress me as properly loyal to his lawful superiors, nor as displaying that activity and energy of mind and body that the opportunities before him seemed to call for. He was polite and considerate and went so far toward showing his

appreciation of my frankness as to ask me if he ever took another command to accept a place on his staff. Of course, I replied to him as I did to McClernand, though I had little expectation of ever being called to the staff of either.

Notwithstanding its interesting and unusual features, my visit to McClellan was far from reassuring in any respect. In addition to his depressed frame of mind, I found a bad state of feeling among the officers of his staff, three of whom were drinking heavily, while others were talking both loudly and disloyally. They not only disapproved McClellan's removal, which was felt to be imminent, but openly denounced the President's Emancipation Proclamation. Not only did several earnestly advocate McClellan's resistance to the order relieving him, but one man declared that the army should change front on Washington and that when it arrived there, McClellan should turn the government out and take charge of both civil and military affairs himself. While this was merely camp-fire talk, it indicated bad feeling on the part of officers who should have known better. It culminated, however, in a way hardly foreseen. One of the number in a loud and resonant voice declared that he wouldn't serve Lincoln's abolition government any longer, but intended to send in his resignation and go home at once. Another called out: "That's the talk!" Still another loudly gave his approval, whereupon the only Southerner present, Martin of Kentucky, got up and, drawing his wallet from his pocket, exclaimed: "I am tired of such senseless talk," and slapping his wallet with his open hand added, "I'll bet fifty dollars, and here's the money, that not a

d—d one of you ever resigns so long as Uncle Abraham's greenback mill keeps grinding. Now put up or shut up!" And that was the end of the seditious talk that night.

After giving my testimony before the court-martial, I returned to Washington, feeling depressed if not discouraged. I had joined McClellan's staff with the conviction that he was our foremost organizer, disciplinarian, and leader, and was commanding our best-trained veterans, which must be our main dependence for putting down the rebellion. To that general and that army, it seemed, we must look for superior genius, strategy, discipline, fortitude, and final victory. I left it greatly disappointed. While I was far from despairing, I felt sure our triumph over the Confederacy would be delayed, and when it did come, as come it must, it would not be due to superior generalship and discipline, but rather to superior resources in men, money, and determination—in short, "to main strength and awkwardness" rather than to geuius and strategy. I realized then for the first time that Gibbon, the historian, was right when he declared that "the great battles won by the lessons of tactics may be enumerated by the epic poems composed from the inspirations of rhetoric."

With combined feelings of disillusionment and hope, I reached Washington on October 17, and, after giving McClernand a full account of my interview with McClellan and learning that, although the formal orders for his Vicksburg project had not yet reached him, he was still confident of receiving them at an early day, I got my traps together and started north four days later.

Having been informally authorized to visit New York for the purpose of getting a regiment of volunteers, before going west, with letters to Thurlow Weed, at that time the political boss of the Empire State, I called on him at the Astor House the next day. He received me kindly and even graciously, but when I told him that I was a regular army man from Illinois under orders to report to Grant in the west, but wanted service in the line with a New York volunteer regiment, he grew perceptibly reserved. He asked my age and rank, and inquired where I had served, and after intimating that he might secure the position of major or even lieutenant colonel for me, he added frankly that the colonelcies must be reserved for New Yorkers. From this it was evident that I could expect nothing from him. By this time it had become pretty well known that the War Department would not give a regular leave of absence for anything less than the command of a regiment, which accounts for the high rank I was seeking, as well as for the fact that I had not already accepted the rank of lieutenant colonel in the First Delaware Cavalry. I was, however, patient and waited around several days in hopes that I might find an opening, but in vain. The great man was dignified, considerate, and patronizing. He said nothing to discourage either my ambition or my desire for service, but, on the other hand, each interview bore it in upon me that he was considering the political rather than the military aspects of the case. As I was interested in the military rather than the political needs of the government, and as my education and my experience so far had convinced me that I was better

prepared than any civilian for the command of a regiment, I was not long in reaching the conclusion that I should hasten to my new field of duty. I therefore took leave of the distinguished politician, with deep disappointment and with the feeling that he was an entirely new type and had given me a new point of view from which to regard the war and the organization of the army. Reflecting that armies must be raised as well as instructed and commanded, I made my way as rapidly as possible to the southwest, resolved to earn my promotion in the field rather than try to get it through the politicians and their influence.

V

ON GRANT'S STAFF

West Tennessee—Major Wilson—Northern Mississippi—Major Rawlins—General Grant—General McPherson—First service with Cavalry—True line of Operations—Campaign of Vicksburg—Yazoo Pass—Running the Batteries.

Although I hastened west my troubles were not yet ended. With delays and stop-overs caused by overworked railroads and broken connections delaying my groom and horses, as well as myself, I did not reach Jackson, Tennessee, till November 7. Almost the first man I met there was my brother Henry, who had left West Point early the year before to help raise the Eighteenth Illinois Infantry of which he became the adjutant. He had already been promoted to captain and was then serving temporarily on General Sullivan's staff in the campaign against Forrest, who had just come on the stage and was smashing things in west Tennessee. My brother had taken a gallant part in the capture of Forts Henry and Donelson and in the battle of Shiloh. He had been twice wounded and had but lately returned to duty. He had early become known to the leading generals as an active and fearless officer and an excellent drill-master with re-

markable presence of mind. He had led his company in the successful charge against the enemy's works at Donelson, had been shot through the body, as he thought, and paralyzed, had been pulled to cover under the hillside he had just surmounted, by a comrade who covered him with a blanket and left him for dead, had revived, cut a crutch, rejoined his company, and fought with it till night when the bullet was cut out of his back. Fortunately it had "gone around, not through" him. At Shiloh he distinguished himself by leading his men to the capture of a battery and by turning it against the enemy. Having been drilled for a year at West Point, he was as much at home in the artillery as he was with the infantry.[1] While working the captured guns, one of his gunners thoughtlessly dropped an armful of shrapnel near the muzzle of a piece, the flash from which set the wrappings on fire. Fearing an explosion, my brother, without tremor or a moment's hesitation, seized the shell and hurled it to the front where its explosion did no harm. It was in allusion to this and other gallant feats that General Oglesby, afterward senator and governor of Illinois, said with an emphatic oath: "Captain Wilson was the bravest man I ever knew!"

As all these events had taken place since I last met him two years before at West Point, I was glad to see him and to learn through him something of the rank and file of the army I was about to join. He afterward took a gallant part in the campaign and capture of Vicksburg and in all the operations of the Thirteenth Army Corps till the end of the war, serving in turn on the staff of Lawler, Logan,

[1] O. R. Series 1, Vol. X, part I, pp. 121, 127, 129.

Washburn, and Steele, but when he was promoted to major, he returned to his regiment and commanded it till it was "fought to a frazzle" and finally mustered out at the end of the war. He was duly commissioned both lieutenant colonel and colonel, but owing to the reduction of the regiment's strength and to the failure of the state to fill it with recruits, he was never mustered into the service on either of his higher commissions. During the Vicksburg campaign I met him frequently and always learned more from him as to the opinions, conduct, and point of view of the enlisted men and junior officers than from anyone else. For his high courage and cheerful disposition he was a prime favorite with all. He survived the war in broken health, and was finally drowned in the Ohio River.

The day after reaching Jackson I went to Lagrange, a small town near Grand Junction, close to the Mississippi line, where I found Grant's headquarters, reported for duty, and was promptly announced as chief topographical engineer of the Army of the Tennessee. A day or two later Grant sent me as chief engineer to McPherson whom I had left in Boston the year before. This was for temporary duty only. I have always thought the order was suggested as much by the desire to gratify McPherson and myself as by the actual necessities of the case. This is shown by the following extract from a note written by McPherson to Rawlins:

> . . . You are a trump. I would rather have Wilson for my engineer than any officer I know. We are old friends—came home from California together last fall. . . .[1]

[1] O. R. Series 1, Vol. 17, Part 2, McPherson to Rawlins, Oct. 27, 1862.

My first meeting with Rawlins, Grant's adjutant general, occurred immediately after my arrival at Lagrange, and was one of the notable events of my life. On entering his office, I found him alone, busy at his desk. After announcing myself and my desire to report for duty, Rawlins swung round from his desk and said:

"General Grant is absent at Memphis, but will be back shortly; I'm Major Rawlins, his adjutant; I am glad to see you, lieutenant; d—d glad to see you. We've been looking for you for several days. We need you here. I know all about you. I am from Illinois, as you are. Your grandfather was my friend and I want to be friends with you. Indeed, I want to form an alliance, offensive and defensive, with you."[1]

This warm and hearty welcome did not surprise me, for I had already heard Rawlins spoken of as a man of good sense, simple manners, and great independence. His frank and hearty greeting won me at once, and while he was talking with such unusual freedom, I was doing my best to gauge him and his character. He interested me from the first by his steady gaze, his strong voice, and his direct and emphatic speech. He treated me from that meeting with as much frankness and confidence as if he had known me always. He was then about thirty-two years old, five feet seven inches tall, broad-shouldered, stout-limbed, and of strong and vigorous health. With jet black hair and brown steady eyes, swarthy complexion, fine teeth, a firm mouth, and a clear, resonant voice, he impressed me as a very earnest, able man, so entirely concentrated in his

[1] Wilson's "Life of John A. Rawlins," etc., p. 95.

duties that he gave no thought to conventionalities and but little to the words that fell from his lips. Having, as I afterward learned, been a charcoal burner till he was twenty-three, he earned the money for two terms at the Rock River Seminary. After that he studied and practiced law, became city attorney, and a candidate for the electoral college on the Douglas ticket. He had had no time for anything else and least of all for gathering technical military knowledge or preparing himself for the military calling. He had won Grant's good opinion as a citizen and patriot by his impassioned Union speech at a Galena mass-meeting shortly after the Confederates had fired on Sumter. He had then declared himself as irrevocably opposed to secession and the dissolution of the Union, and in favor of the "Arbitrament of Arms!"[1] It was doubtless because of his bold, virile, and patriotic character that Grant invited him before all others to become a member of his staff. It was owing to these qualities and to others not yet developed that he accepted Grant's offer and thereafter till his death shared his fortunes and participated in his promotions. Even at the date of my first acquaintance with him, Rawlins understood Grant's strength and weakness better than anyone else, and, to use Grant's own phrase a year later, had "come to be more nearly indispensable to him than anyone else."

While Grant was absent at Memphis there was but little going on at headquarters and Rawlins evidently thought it a good opportunity to get acquainted and to tell me about Grant and his army, its campaigns, its leading generals, and the many col-

[1] Wilson's "Life of Rawlins."

onels of note serving with it, about the staff officers at headquarters, and finally about even the commanding general himself upon whom so much depended, and about whom the tongue of detraction had already had much to say. All of this and more he developed with amazing skill and comprehensiveness. He had evidently satisfied himself before my arrival from McPherson and others as to my character and trustworthiness as well as to my sense of discipline and my earnestness in the cause which that army was upholding. Our conversation took a wide range and, long before it was finished, encouraged him, much to my gratification, to declare that he wanted "to form an alliance offensive and defensive" with me. He frankly confessed that he had no technical knowledge of war, military science, or military administration, and as there were no other West Point men on the field staff and but few in that army, he would necessarily and frequently have to lean not only upon my book knowledge, but possibly upon my observation and experience. It was in every way a reassuring reception, and when it is considered that although I had had a five years' course at West Point and one year's active campaigning, including the capture of Port Royal, the siege and reduction of Fort Pulaski, the battle of Secessionville in front of Charleston, and the campaign and battle of Antietam, and yet was only a first lieutenant of Engineers, it will be seen that I had good reason to feel flattered by his reception. When I recall the fact that Grant on his return, although inclined to greater reticence, received me with the same cordial and hearty welcome, it can readily be understood that I soon felt

I had done well in casting my lot in with him and the army under his command.

During the following weeks our conversations continued, and eventually we touched on every subject connected with that army. Rawlins impressed me from the first as a strong, clear-headed, fearless and patriotic officer, thoroughly devoted to his chief and to the Union cause. So far as I knew, he concealed nothing from me, but opened his mind fully on all subjects of interest. He even gave me an estimate of the staff I was entering. Theodore S. Bowers, his assistant, had been a printer in my native town, and although a small and modest man received his unqualified commendation for clerical efficiency, sobriety, and courage; but several aids-de-camp with higher rank were not so fortunate. How they had got on Grant's staff he never explained; but he made it clear that they were rounders with but little character and less military knowledge or useful experience. He intimated not only that their services were useless, but that their example and influence were thoroughly bad, and that he wanted my help to get rid of them.

But by far the most interesting information Rawlins gave me related to Grant himself and to the perils by which he had been surrounded ever since the capture of Fort Henry and Fort Donelson. He carefully pointed out his modesty, his good sense, his endurance, and, above all, his sound judgment and unshakable self-reliance and courage. He dwelt upon his thorough knowledge of military administration and the customs of service, his familiarity with tactics and organization, and especially with his perfect knowledge of the supply, subsis-

tence, and transportation departments. In reference to these things there was no uncertain sound. He evidently considered Grant in all ways easily ahead of the best of his subordinates, and yet it was not difficult to perceive that his mind was ill at ease. Indeed, he did not hesitate to refer to the newspaper charges against Grant's habits as a matter of grave concern, and while he declared that they were not as bad as either the newspapers or one of his ambitious generals had made them out, he frankly confessed that there was enough in them not only to make his true friends wish there were less, but to do all in their power to "stay him from falling". While pointing out the real dangers and concealing nothing, he evidently wanted me to understand them fully in order that I might do my part to nullify them. He dwelt upon the fact that Grant had in no case neglected his duty, nor failed to drive his advantage home, but on the contrary had in every instance done all that any man could do to ensure success and to prevent disaster. He declared that Grant was "a good man, who knew his business better than any of his ambitious subordinates and that we could win with him if the government would but trust him and let him alone." On another occasion he said: "I am told you don't drink, but you should know there are lots of men in this army, some on Grant's staff, who not only drink themselves but like to see others drink, and whenever they get a chance they tempt their chief, and I want you to help me clean them out." And it was this frank and unhesitating confidence which Rawlins reposed in me that sealed our friendship and united us in a common cause as long as he lived.

Having thus given me completely his confidence I naturally drew Rawlins out further, as opportunity offered, in regard to the operations from Belmont to Corinth. His opinions were favorable to Grant as well as to his generals and his troops. He praised them all with discrimination, except McClernand and Lew Wallace. He even praised McClernand for zeal and courage, but denounced his ambition, his jealousy, and his disposition to intrigue with the politicians in Washington. But he made no excuse for Lew Wallace, whom he charged with having been a laggard in the Shiloh campaign, and emphasized the charge by an account of the orders he had personally given him to march to the battlefield. He praised both Sherman and McPherson as brilliant and loyal subordinates, and fully exposed the personal peculiarities of the officers about headquarters. He commended Bowers and Rowley as brave, patriotic, and honorable men with whom it was a pleasure to serve. He regarded Hilyer as an able man who had been a friend of Grant in the days of his poverty, but doubted his disinterestedness as well as his honesty. He denounced Lagow and Riggin as triflers out of their depth, whose services were worth nothing and whose influence was wholly bad.

I met Grant first shortly after his return from Memphis, and, although somewhat disappointed at his simple and unmilitary bearing, his friendly welcome won my heart at once. He was at first somewhat reserved, but as we fell into conversation about the Antietam campaign and the progress of the war, east and west, he warmed up and became both fluent and interesting. While he showed but little of that

smartness of carriage and dress and none of that hauteur or affectation of rank and superior knowledge which were so noticeable in McClellan as well as in many other regular army men, he seemed self-contained, simple-minded, and direct in all his thoughts and ways. Putting on no airs whatever and using nothing but the mildest and cleanest language, he treated me from the start with cordiality and without the slightest assumption of personal or official superiority. As I afterward learned, this was always his way, and while he invited no confidences, he repelled none, and thus got all that were worth having. Showing no sign whatever of hard living or bad habits, he produced a pleasant but by no means striking impression at first. With what I heard from others, I naturally suspended judgment, and as my first orders were to join McPherson with the right wing of the army for the movement about to begin, instead of to settle down at headquarters and organize my branch of the staff service, I naturally got the impression that Grant was neither a great organizer nor much of a theorist in military matters. This opinion grew gradually into a settled conviction, and in spite of his great achievements, which were won mainly by attention to broad general principles rather than to technical details, I have never had occasion to materially change these earlier impressions.

By Grant's permission I remained at first at headquarters and in only a few days I got together a force of civil and military assistants and photographers with the customary outfit for gathering information, surveying, sketching, and mapping the country. As this required close attention, I saw

but little of Grant, not because he was inaccessible or offish, but because he appeared to take little interest in this work. Rawlins, whom I saw often and with whom my intimacy grew apace, seemed to be the head-center of all that was going on. The aids-de-camp and personal staff, whom I came gradually to know, turned out to be altogether as Rawlins had prepared me to find them.

Fortunately, Grant always had able and experienced supply officers, the most notable of whom were Macfeeley, chief commissary, and Bingham, chief quartermaster, both graduates of West Point and both required to know but little beyond the numbers of the troops and the necessary preparations for their subsistence, equipment, and transportation. While neither of those officers actually joined headquarters till the Vicksburg campaign was well under way, they were exceedingly level-headed men, and, although but little in evidence, they always performed their complicated and widely extended duties so efficiently and so silently wherever they were that no one ever thought of going hungry or unclad, or even of asking who the chief commissary or the chief quartermaster was. Grant himself had had much experience in those departments in the Mexican War and on the frontier, and gave the chiefs both absolute liberty and absolute confidence. Bingham was too dignified and too serious a person to be treated lightly, but the chief commissary, while never neglecting his business, was a jolly good fellow with whom Grant never lost a chance to crack a joke. His favorite one was to call him Robert "X." Macfeeley because, as he laughingly said,

that was the way Macfeeley's father always signed his name.

As the preliminary movement toward central Mississippi was about to begin, I joined McPherson on November 16, and the next day received a personal note from Grant, directing me to go with an advanced cavalry reconnoissance through Ripley and Oxford in the direction of Grenada. During the trip which lasted three days I took part in my first cavalry skirmish and charge. Being better mounted than anyone else, I outstripped my companions and, coming up with the flying enemy, emptied my revolvers and captured one prisoner, whom I brought in.

On our way back with all the horses and mules we could gather in the country, I was not surprised to see that our Kansas "Jay-hawkers" had but little respect for the people of the country and none for their property. Just outside of Ripley I saw a trooper carrying a Yankee clock and, of course, asked him where he got it and what he was going to do with it. He replied at once: "I got it in town and I am going to take it to camp and get a pair of the little wheels out of it for spur rowels." It was a new idea to me, but I noticed afterward that many cavalrymen had adopted the picturesque fashion; and it was more or less in vogue till the end of the war.

Although ordered sooner, McPherson did not actually begin his forward movement till November 28. The winter rains had already set in and the roads of unwrought dirt without macadam or metal of any kind were already getting soft. The trains soon cut them up so badly that

our daily progress was never more than ten miles and frequently less, instead of twice as much. We passed slowly through Holly Springs, Waterford, and Oxford; the columns encumbered by heavy trains gave plenty of time for straggling and plundering, both of which were new and discouraging to me but which, so far as I could see, seemed to have already become the habit with western troops. Not much effort was made to stop either, and consequently I was frequently called upon by women and children for protection, which, as far as I could, I freely gave. While the custom of living off the country or "making war support war" was not yet the rule, it was fast becoming the practice to take everything in the way of supplies both for man and beast. Northern Mississippi was at that time thinly populated and extensively covered with dense forests. The farms and villages were small and the masses of the people poor. Of course, slavery prevailed, but only the richer planters of the Tallahatchie and Yazoo bottoms had slaves in any number, and yet both rich and poor, as far as I could see, were secessionists who hated Yankees with all their might. A Union man was hard to find, while it was impossible to find a Union woman. But it was in the Mississippi uplands, with their twenty bushels of corn and two hundred pounds of cotton to the acre, that I first heard the phrase: "This is the rich man's war, but the poor man's fight."

About this time my name appeared in the *Chicago Tribune* as assistant inspector general of the Tenth Army Corps, with the rank of lieutenant colonel. As I had already served with Hunter and received many marks of his favor, I was not sur-

prised at the announcement. It was great promotion for me, but, of course, I could take no action in regard to it till I received official notice from the War Department.

Meanwhile I told Grant about it, adding that I could not afford to decline, and as operations were so well under way, I should leave with great reluctance. He replied with sympathy and good feeling, but agreed with me that I could take no action for the present. Fortunately, however, while Grant's army was working its way painfully toward Oxford, in the absence of formal orders, it was both my duty and pleasure to continue with it, helping wherever opportunity offered, which was generally with the cavalry in the advance. As that arm was green and badly organized, I volunteered to act as adjutant to Colonel Dickey, a lawyer and afterward a judge of the Illinois supreme court, who was the senior officer present. He had his own regiment, in which I had some time before been offered the position of lieutenant colonel, one from Iowa under Hatch, who later commanded a division under me, one from Michigan under Colonel Mizner, a regular, and one from Kansas under Colonel A. L. Lee, an original "Jay-hawker". They were excellent material, but all untrained and badly deficient in discipline. In the advance they did well, but in the retreat they were entirely unmanageable. The jay-hawkers were apparently more bent on plunder than fighting. The entire organization was lacking in coherence, coöperation, and steadiness. When Van Dorn and William H. Jackson, a few days later, passed around Grant's army, capturing his "rear headquarters" and his main depot of sup-

plies at Holly Springs, with many of the infantry garrison which should have defended them, Dickey's raw and undisciplined cavalry, instead of following and harassing the enemy, turned tail and rejoined the infantry columns as soon as possible.

While the capture of his depots was commonly regarded as fatal to Grant's campaign and as having compelled its abandonment, it really had but little effect in that direction. It had already become apparent that a campaign in midwinter over muddy roads and through poor country was not feasible for the force then in the field. With a single line of railway several hundred miles long through a hostile region, nothing but dirt roads to march on, no bridge-train and many swollen streams to cross, and with the farms already denuded of their supplies for men and animals, the least experienced officers soon perceived that our advance into central Mississippi must necessarily be so slow that the enemy would have ample time to concentrate a larger force against us.

I not only pointed out all this to Grant, McPherson, and Rawlins, but I also undertook to show them that the Mississippi River itself was the true, central, and only feasible line of operations and supply for an army large enough for the task of taking Vicksburg. I availed myself of the capture of Holly Springs and the rupture of our railroad to the rear to insist upon the point that the great river could neither be broken nor obstructed north of Vicksburg.

But this was not all. I naturally sought the earliest opportunity to tell Grant what I had heard in Washington of the government's real plans to

capture Vicksburg and open the Mississippi. As a staff officer it was my duty to make known these plans as well as to point out that Vicksburg was the chief strategic center not only in his department, but in all that theater of operations, and that it was his right and duty as department commander to command all the troops engaged in its capture, and especially to take charge in person of the principal column for that purpose.

I dwelt on McClernand's intimacy with Lincoln, his fellow townsman, as well as on the favor that he was supposed to enjoy with his fellow Democrat, Stanton; I called attention to the fact that he had not only been sent west to raise new troops, but had been specially authorized to organize and command an expedition for the specific purpose of capturing Vicksburg and opening the Mississippi. Inasmuch as these facts were generally known to the public and the plans for carrying them out were fast taking definite shape, I urged Grant to give up the campaign by land and go in person with the main body of his troops down the river. I emphasized the fact that this was the only way in which he could save himself from being supplanted by a subordinate and confined to secondary operations in his own department, and fortunately as it turned out his own inclinations were in accord with my suggestions. But before taking definite action he communicated with Halleck for permission to go with the troops of his own department. It does not appear that Halleck ever discussed the question of rank or priority as between Grant and McClernand with the Secretary of War or the President, and the probability is that he did not, but decided it on his

own responsibility. He thoroughly knew McClernand as well as other leading generals, and in this instance at least was Grant's real friend. Indeed, the case seemed to call for no specific orders, for so long as Grant remained in command of the department to which he had been assigned by the President, he was both by precedent and the customs of service at full liberty to direct all operations within its limits and to accompany such movements as he might think of sufficient importance to require his personal supervision and presence.

But shortly afterward the situation was still further clarified by a Presidential order dividing the forces of the department into four army corps, the Thirteenth under McClernand, the Fifteenth under Sherman, the Sixteenth under Hurlbut, and the Seventeenth under McPherson, the whole constituting the Army of the Tennessee under Grant. This gave him a full army staff, and as soon as the facts became officially known he announced Rawlins as adjutant general with the rank of lieutenant colonel. Establishing headquarters at Memphis, but without delaying to perfect his organization, he proceeded on January 16, 1863, by steamer to visit that part of his army already down the river. He took Rawlins and me with him, and it was during this trip, which lasted four days, that I got thoroughly acquainted with him. He treated both of us as equals rather than as subordinates. He acted throughout with a simplicity, modesty, and good fellowship that won my hearty admiration, friendship, and confidence. He made no pretensions to superior knowledge or intelligence, but discussed every question with us as though we were as old as himself and

without the slightest reserve or assumption of superior knowledge. Indeed, his only thought seemed to be to concentrate his army and with such help as we could give him to find a practicable line of operations on which to lead it to victory.

It was early in this trip that he turned to my case and disposed of it as far as rested with him in a most satisfactory way. After alluding to the orders which were to take me away from him, he said with a kindly smile:

"Wilson, I see old David Hunter and go him one better. He has made you lieutenant colonel and inspector general of the Tenth Corps, but I shall nominate you inspector general of the Army of the Tennessee. That beats him and you will remain with us!"

It was a gratifying coincidence, but neither Grant nor I had any other than newspaper knowledge of the fact at the time that Hunter had formally named me as early as January 20, 1863, for lieutenant colonel and assistant inspector general,[1] and whether this was deserved or not, I regarded it as a piece of rare good fortune that my first year's service had won me the confidence of two such men as Hunter and Grant with promotion at their hands from lieutenant to lieutenant colonel, thus giving me the choice of service with either of them.

As soon as we got back to Memphis, where I found my formal order to report to Hunter, Grant telegraphed and the next day, January 23, wrote to Halleck in complimentary terms asking again for authority to retain me. From that letter he got permission to keep me "temporarily" if I was actually

[1] O. R. Series 1, Vol. XIV, p. 392.

engaged in "siege operations", but it was not till April 19, at Grant's renewed request, that Thomas, the adjutant general of the army, then with us, issued an order subject to the approval of the Secretary of War, formally transferring me from the Tenth Army Corps to the department of the Tennessee, "to fill an original vacancy" in the Inspector General's Department.

That action settled it, and not only gave me all the rank and pay I should have had elsewhere, but all the work and opportunity a soldier's heart could desire, and it was the very next day that Rawlins assured me the General had already come to rely upon my military judgment more fully than upon that of anyone else.[1] Thenceforth I am sure I enjoyed his full confidence in every professional matter from military engineering to the daily operations and condition of the troops in the field, and in confirmation of his good opinion it is my pleasant duty to add that I had even more encouragement and commendation than I considered myself entitled to. My relations with both Rawlins and our common chief grew more and more intimate, and as long as we served together we were as three men with but a single purpose.

Among other questions discussed on our first trip down the river was that of consolidating the four departments in the Mississippi valley into a single military division, so as to unite and utilize

[1] O. R. Series 1, Vol. XXIV, Part III, p. 132, Grant to Admiral Porter, March 23, 1863.

. . . "Col. Wilson, in whose judgment I place great reliance, writes that land forces cannot act till the batteries are silenced. He thinks, too, that there has been unnecessary delay in reaching that point" [Fort Pemberton].

all its resources in the great undertaking before us. I had brought the subject forward, and even went so far as to point out that the Government, if it adopted the measure, might send McClellan or some other man of higher rank to exercise supreme command, but this did not appear to affect Grant's views. He was so deeply impressed with the wisdom and importance of the suggestion that he directed me to draft a letter to Halleck not only covering the recommendation, but calling special attention to the fact that it was made with no desire on his part to receive the chief command. This was done and the paragraph with no essential change was incorporated with others and sent to its destination shortly after our return to Memphis. It has since passed into the official records,[1] but it is worthy of note that it was not carried into effect till after the capture of Vicksburg when the defeat of Chickamauga made the measure an absolute necessity.[2] By that time Grant's fame had become world-wide, and there was no one left in the west to dispute the honor with him. McClernand had eliminated himself. Rosecrans had not only suffered an overwhelming defeat, but had been swept from the field with the right wing of his army. Sherman had opposed the final movement which led to the capture of Vicksburg. McPherson had played his subordinate part well but with no special distinction. Having graduated at the head of his class he had been credited by the West Point professors with having made Grant's plans and furnished him

[1] O. R. Serial No. 36, p. 8, Grant to Halleck, Memphis, January 20, 1863.

[2] "Diary of Gideon Welles."

with brains to carry them out, but it was well known in the army that this claim was without foundation in fact.

Thomas, although in another department, was the only man, except Grant himself, connected with the western armies who had made no failures, but when Buell was relieved from command of the Army of the Cumberland, Thomas had protested so strongly against the injustice of it that he was passed over while another was assigned to the place. This action on the part of Thomas had been looked upon by the authorities in Washington as due rather to a lack of self-confidence than to modesty, and although the lofty Virginian had always borne himself well and finally won the proud title of "The Rock of Chickamauga," it was left to Grant several months later to relieve the unfortunate Rosecrans and put the successful Thomas in the place he should have had before. And yet it is an open secret that Grant and Thomas never became close friends.

But to return to the Vicksburg campaign. The preliminary movement in northern Mississippi having been abandoned and the first advance against the principal stronghold itself having failed, it became apparent that Grant was confronted by a problem of the first magnitude, and that it would require all the troops of his department and all that could be drawn from other departments to enable him to solve it. Accordingly, while concentrating his army at the front, he bent his efforts to the task of getting a footing for it on the high land east of the Yazoo bottoms. This complicated task will be better un-

derstood when it is remembered that the head of the Mississippi delta is really at Cairo, and that it gradually widens from there to the Gulf. The river itself occasionally reaches the bluffs as at Memphis, Helena, and Vicksburg, and, as the banks are everywhere subject to overflow, the "bottoms" are cut up by bayous, creeks, and lateral rivers, which make it entirely impassable during freshets and most difficult even in the dry season. There are no graded roads and but few bridges, and as the Cold Water and the Tallahatchie, uniting in the Yazoo, were navigable and the Yazoo itself still wider and deeper, military operations across or along them were so difficult and so slow, and the obstacles to be overcome so formidable, that a handful of rebels were able to foil, if not defeat, many times their own numbers. The most strenuous effort was made to send an army through the Yazoo Pass, Moon Lake, the Cold Water, and the Tallahatchie into the Yazoo River, and by incredible efforts a force of over twenty thousand men were within reach of Fort Pemberton at the head of the Yazoo when they were stopped by an overflow which isolated the fortifications.

This expedition under my personal supervision was covered by a detachment of light iron-clads and gunboats, and made its way by the winding rivers over one hundred and fifty miles through the overhanging forest. The Yazoo Pass to the Cold Water was about twenty miles long, but beyond Moon Lake it was so narrow that the enemy cut it full of forest trees from the banks. Many reached entirely across the stream and many others were felled diagonally across the others, so that for miles

there was an entanglement so thick the troops could cross upon it from bank to bank. I thought at first that the trees could be trimmed up and hauled out by block, tackle, and capstan, but I soon found that this method was too slow and that as fast as we cleared out the obstructions above, the enemy made new ones below.

The next plan tried was that of hitching steamboat hawsers, five or six hundred feet long, to the ends of the logs, doubling them back, and then stringing out four or five hundred men with orders to lay hold and march. This plan proved entirely efficacious. Trees weighing thirty or forty tons, covered with spreading limbs, were drawn out as fast as the men could march. The working parties were multiplied till all our cables were in use, and none who has not seen it can understand with what speed the trees were drawn out and the pass opened for navigation. The combined strength of a full regiment was irresistible, and as many officers and men were woodsmen, they soon became most expert in the work. Seeing such an exhibition of strength it is easy enough to understand how the Egyptians moved the great stones, columns, and slabs from the quarries to their temples and pyramids. But while the troops made good progress in the daytime, it was impossible to get the gunboats to move at all at night, even after they reached the open river beyond the obstructions. The consequence was that the enemy had time to construct and arm fortifications at the head of the Yazoo, and thereby make our entry into that river impossible. One of our iron-clads, after getting within range, was disabled by the shot of a heavy gun from the fort, and this

so alarmed the naval commander that he refused to push others to closer quarters for fear that they might also be injured, become unmanageable, and prove a total loss. The expedition was therefore abandoned, but it was afterward found that the enemy was out of ammunition and would have given up his works had our ships continued their attack even at longer range. This is one of the best illustrations that came under my observation during the war, that it is always better to continue an attack when you can than to give it up without some overwhelming necessity.

One of the leading transports in the operations on Yazoo Pass was the river steamer *Bill Henderson,* commanded by Captain Lamont, an alert, active, and resourceful man, full of patriotism and courage. His first pilot was one Mark Munday, a cool, nervy, sensible fellow, always ready to go and never afraid to express his opinions. But one day in the midst of our heaviest work, when every man was doing his best, Munday said: "Pardon me, Colonel, but do you think you will ever get the rebels on this line?"

I replied: "Munday, I can't tell, but you can rest assured we'll do our best, and if we don't get them, we'll keep a lot of them mighty busy till we find out."

Thereupon, without a thought of impoliteness, he said:

"Colonel, that reminds me of an incident which occurred in my country when I was a boy. One of our neighbors had a half-witted son. While walking in the woods one day this boy saw a little gray sapsucker hopping up the side of a tree, and, thinking

he would like to have it, he pulled off his coat and started to climb the tree after it. As he neared the bird it hopped up higher. Finally, the boy and the bird got pretty well toward the top, when a neighbor coming by called out: 'John, what are you doing up there?' 'Oh,' said John, 'I'm trying to catch this darned thing.'

"'Why, you'll never do that as long as you live.'

"'Well,' said the boy, 'if I don't catch it, you can bet your life I'll worry it like hell.'"

And that was the way of it, not only on that route but on all the others on both sides of the river, till it became certain that no land route could be used successfully, and that there was nothing left for us but to run by Vicksburg with the gunboats and transports and march the troops by the west side to some suitable point below from which we could ferry them to the east side of the river.

In front of Vicksburg the river makes a great loop to the Vicksburg bluff, and from the year previous, when Farragut ran by the place from below, before it was heavily fortified it was commonly believed that a canal might be cut across the narrow point and the river turned through it out of the range of the enemy's heavy guns. Indeed, General Williams had located and made a tentative but ineffectual cut the year before, and now the same project again became prominent. It was, however, destined to final failure. From the first time I saw it, I condemned it as impracticable, contending that even at a high stage of the river, the water would not flow across the point, but would follow the canal only to its low spoon-like axis and then spread out into the country back of it,

unless the canal were made deep enough to take in the water necessary to scour it to a navigable depth at a medium stage of the river. But a still more fatal objection was that the canal pointed to the heights just below the city, and would surely be enfiladed by cannon fire from batteries, properly located and constructed for that purpose. Other canal projects, the most prominent of which was that through Lake Providence to connect with a series of bayous west of the river, were considered, but, one after the other, all were abandoned. The canals could not be made wide enough or deep enough. The bayous were too narrow, too crooked, or too much overhung by forest trees, or the Mississippi was too uncertain in its rise and fall to give the proper volume of water. I gave my opinion against them one after the other as they were proposed, but they were all tried and abandoned, with no actual advantage except that they kept our troops occupied and the enemy more or less worried and apprehensive.

On the day Grant and his staff arrived at Milliken's Bend, he invited Sherman, McClernand, McPherson, Blair, Steele, Rawlins, and myself to accompany him across the point commanded by Vicksburg. I had been sent from Memphis several days in advance to look over the ground and prepare a report for the General on his arrival, and, of course, had been active in gathering information and studying the situation.

Rawlins and I rode together. I had already told Grant that the old canal project could not be made successful and during the ride repeated this opinion to Rawlins more in detail. On arriving at the south-

ern outlet of the canal, while the generals were gazing at the heights beyond and Frank Blair was holding forth as to the strategic and political importance of Vicksburg, the necessity and difficulty of its capture, and the certainty that whoever controlled it would also control the Mississippi Valley, Rawlins and I climbed onto the butt of a big cottonwood, which had been undercut and had fallen headlong into the river. There we took up the subject in all its branches and aspects, and during the discussion I pointed out that there were only three possible plans for the capture of the stronghold, namely:

First, to turn it by the left through the Yazoo River, the Sunflower, or the Yazoo Pass.

Second, to make a direct landing against the wharf and carry it by escalade or *coup de main,* or

Third, to run the batteries with the iron-clads, gunboats, transports and barges and march the troops across country to such point below as might be selected as the base of operations against the interior of the state and the defenses of the city.

For various reasons, all the plans for reaching a footing east of the Yazoo were afterward found to be impracticable and were turned down. The second was dismissed as entirely too hazardous for troops no better trained and disciplined than ours, and this brought us to the third plan. Rawlins favored it strongly from the first, but, recognizing its boldness and realizing that in case of failure it might lead to a great disaster, he asked if I was sure it could be carried out. The idea that the "tin-clad gunboats" and the transports with their light upper works would be destroyed by the

enemy's guns was in his mind, and he at once asked why this would not be fatal to the plan.

To this I replied that most professional soldiers would doubtless hold that opinion, but I had come to a different conclusion. I explained that I had been present the year before at the capture of Port Royal, where our wooden men-of-war at close range had engaged the enemy's fortifications, armed with heavy guns on both sides of the harbor, for the better part of a whole day, and had not only silenced them, but had suffered little injury with trifling loss of life. I pointed out that the naval vessels had circled around the harbor between the forts not only once but several times in broad daylight, engaging them almost muzzle to muzzle first on one side and then on the other, and that the result had shown that such operations were much less dangerous than they were commonly believed to be. I declared that the only way to stop them would be by torpedoes and mines, and that such devices could not be kept in place in the swift current of the Mississippi.

We not only considered the suggestion from every point of view, but we considered and condemned the proposition which was already gaining currency, that the army might have to abandon the campaign against Vicksburg and unite with the Army of the Cumberland on the Tennessee River. While this proposition, or one something like it, was conceded to be sound enough as a measure of strategy after everything else had been tried, it was actually advocated by Sherman and perhaps others. Rawlins and I concurred in condemning it for the present as likely to be fatal to Grant and sure to be greatly discouraging to the country. Before we

got back to our steamboat, Rawlins said: "Wilson, I believe you are right, and I shall advise Grant to carry your plan into effect at once."[1]

That afternoon I was sent to lead the expedition through Yazoo Pass, Moon Lake, the Cold Water, and the Tallahatchie into the Yazoo. Having outlined the history of that movement, which at one time seemed almost certain to succeed, I need not dwell further upon it. But its failure and sequel are important in connection with what Rawlins told me had taken place during my absence.

On the evening of my departure the principal generals dined with Grant, and at dinner the problem confronting the army came up again for discussion. Every suggestion, no matter who made it, received consideration, but none promised immediate or absolute success. The meeting was about to break up without a satisfactory solution, when Rawlins said: "Wilson and I have a plan for taking Vicksburg none of you have referred to yet."

"What is it, Rawlins—what is it?" said Sherman.

"Oh, you will condemn it as too dangerous," said Rawlins.

"Never mind that, let us have it," said Sherman.

Whereupon Rawlins explained my proposition to run the batteries under cover of darkness with the gunboats and transports and march the troops below by land, to the first feasible crossing.

As Rawlins had predicted, Sherman at once and with emphasis declared: "It can't be done. It is

[1] Compare my letter, Jan. 18, 1862, to Pelouze A. A. G., O. R. Series 1, Vol. VI, p. 219.

impracticable. The transports will be destroyed. The enemy's guns will sink them or set them afire." And that settled it for the time being, for although Rawlins gave the reasons clearly and emphatically for the faith that was in us, no one came to his support. Even Grant kept silent, though he tells us clearly enough in his memoirs, written many years afterward, that it was his purpose from the first to carry that plan into effect if the others failed.

Neither McClernand nor McPherson had a word to say in favor of running the rebel batteries, although it is possible that McClernand might have had an idea from the first of turning Vicksburg and then operating eastward from it as a base against the heart of the Confederacy.

But be this as it may, the plan made its way slowly and it was not till all side operations through the Yazoo basin for getting a footing on the uplands of Mississippi had failed that serious attention was given to its execution, the essence of which was running the batteries with the transports. Manifestly all canal projects and bayou routes on either side of the river had for their immediate object the avoidance of the enemy's heavy guns on the Vicksburg bluffs, which were regarded as fatal to this plan, and it was not till each and every other had actually failed that the simple and only feasible plan was openly adopted and successfully carried into effect.

No one can say with absolute certainty just when it first received Grant's approval, but it is certain that he did not tell either Rawlins or me that he was going to carry it into effect till he told us he was going to ask Admiral Porter, the naval com-

mander, to lead the transports with a section of his fleet by the batteries under cover of darkness. Even then both he and Porter thought it prudent to divide their fleets and try it with a part before risking the whole, and this was done.

That the plan had its first suggestion as described above, three or four months before it was undertaken, there can be no doubt, nor is there any doubt, even after it was fully under way, that Sherman thought it too hazardous and tried to dissuade Grant from carrying it out. Not only did he write Rawlins a letter to that end,[1] but he personally asked me to join in advising Grant to give up the plan, recommending that he should withdraw the army from the neighborhood of Vicksburg, and transfer it by way of Memphis to northern Mississippi.

Sherman was earnest and impassioned in support of his views. He quoted Jomini in favor of the policy of concentration. He pointed out the danger of cutting loose from our base, and dwelt upon the danger of the enemy's concentrating first against Grant, and, after using him up, turning against Rosecrans. But while all this was in accordance with the books and the precedents, I declined to give it my support. I felt that Grant was at last on the right road, that he could surely break into the enemy's country with a united and efficient army of forty-five thousand men, that he would be able to scatter Johnston's forces and beat them in detail before they could be concentrated or strongly reenforced, and that, above all, any proposition on Grant's part to withdraw from the front of Vicks-

[1] "Sherman's Memoirs," Vol. 1, p. 343.

burg at that stage, however sound in theory, would certainly be looked upon by the country as a sign of weakness and failure, which would result not only in his being relieved from command, but in scattering, disintegrating, and paralyzing his army. After giving Sherman these views as forcibly as I could, I returned to headquarters, and discussed the subject anew with Rawlins and Dana, the latter of whom had joined us only a few days before as "the eyes of the Government".[1] Fortunately, both fully approved my conclusions and, as the campaign was under way with every prospect of success, they suggested that neither of us should say a word to Grant as to Sherman's state of mind, and, so far as I know, it was not till Sherman's letter of remonstrance reached him that Grant realized how fully his oldest corps commander was opposed to his final plan. My conversation with Rawlins, however, prepared him to advise Grant, when Sherman's letter came to hand, to lay it away unanswered for the present.

Before leaving this episode, it may be well to allude again to Sherman's statement of fundamental principles, for it will be remembered that in the following September the Confederate Government, by detaching Longstreet from Virginia and gathering up all the garrisons in Mississippi and Alabama, including Grant's Vicksburg prisoners, and sending them to reënforce Bragg, inflicted a great and almost fatal defeat upon Rosecrans at Chickamauga.

Here it should be remarked that Sherman would have been as sound in practice as he was in theory if, instead of making his fruitless campaign into

[1] Wilson's "The Life of Charles A. Dana," p. 208 *et seq.*

central and eastern Mississippi after the fall of Vicksburg, he had advised Grant to send him at once or to go in person with two army corps to reënforce Rosecrans. This measure could have been carried out easily in the three months otherwise wasted, not only to save that general from defeat, but to turn his campaign into a great success, but neither Sherman, Grant, nor anyone in Washington seems to have seen the danger or to have thought of averting it till far too late. And this is the way in which war on a grand scale is frequently conducted by even the best generals and the most capable administrations. It well illustrates the fact that, in modern days, the true principle is not only to outnumber the enemy at the vital point at the vital time, but, if possible, to greatly outnumber him at all the important points all the time!

As the event showed, running the Vicksburg batteries, April 16, 1863, was a bloodless and comparatively simple operation. Although the enemy's fire was terrific and the river was lighted up by burning buildings on the shores, the six iron-clads, one ram, and one tug received no damage whatever, and of three river steamers, one was abandoned through cowardice and by accident burnt, while one was disabled in her machinery so that she had to be towed; but even in that way she was still entirely efficient as a transport. Of the next detachment a few nights later, all passed through unscathed, thus verifying my prediction that not more than one in ten would be destroyed in running the batteries. With that danger past, although it was incurred again on a smaller scale a few days later at Grand Gulf, the campaign became a simple one which developed rap-

idly and successfully according to the usual practice of war.

On the night of the first passage Grant with his staff and family moved down the river on his headquarters steamboat to a favorable point of observation just beyond the range of the enemy's guns and witnessed the whole extraordinary pageant. The fleet started after dark, between nine and ten o'clock, but before it got abreast of the enemy's guns all engines were stopped and all lights concealed, and for a few minutes it was hoped that the rapid current might carry the boats by unperceived, but this hope was fallacious. By the time they were abreast of the upper part of the bend, where the river was narrowest, the enemy discovered them and opened fire upon them with all the guns they could bring to bear. A small outhouse near the water was set on fire, lighting up the whole river and the opposite shore. The roar of the heavy guns both from the batteries and the fleet was incessant and impressive, but without starting the engines the fleet drifted by and out of danger, lighted in its lower course by the transport which had been set on fire, abandoned by the crew, and burned to the water's edge.

It was an anxious hour for all, and especially for me. It was a brilliant moonlight night, and during the firing the point opposite the front of the city, as well as the surface of the river, in this bend only eight hundred yards wide, were further lighted up by the burning buildings on the banks. The roar of the enemy's heavy guns, twenty-five in number, from six-inch to ten-inch caliber, was deafening, and the whole scene was grand and awe-inspiring.

One of the Grant children sat on my knees with its arms around my neck, and as each crash came, it nervously clasped me closer, and finally became so frightened that it was put to bed. Mrs. Grant sat by the General's side with the other children near, while the staff and clerks looked on in silence and wonder, if not in doubt. It was not till after midnight that the roar of artillery ceased and silence rested on the scene, and it was not till the next morning that the details became fully known. Field telegraphs for military purposes had not come into use, and telephones were not yet known. The only communication was by courier, and the facts had to be gathered twelve miles below as the crow flies before they could be sent overland to headquarters. But the couriers were too slow for Grant. He had been under a crucial strain and could get no relief except by riding across the bends to New Carthage in person for a conference with both Porter and McClernand. The round trip was nearly seventy-five miles, or a full day's ride each way, and he gladdened my heart by taking me with him. The ride south took much of the day, which we devoted to conversation about the prospect our easy success had opened up. We passed the evening and such part of the night as was necessary in gathering the particulars about running the batteries and providing for further movements. With this done, the next day we rode back to headquarters, discussing the details of carrying forward the campaign now open to us. I counseled Grant again to give up all work on canals and bayous as not only slow and fatiguing, but useless. The feasibility of running by the batteries having been demonstrated beyond fur-

ther question, there was nothing left but to send the entire available force down country as rapidly as possible, and this was fully decided upon while supplies were left to follow by the river as needed.

Immediately after returning to headquarters Grant obtained the order transferring me to his staff, subject to the approval of the Secretary of War, and told Rawlins that he depended more upon my judgment on military matters than upon that of any one else in that army.

Shortly before running the batteries, Lorenzo Thomas, the adjutant general of the army, arrived at Milliken's Bend, and began the organization of negro troops. As he was not long in learning that the enrollment and use of negroes on an equality with white troops was not favorably regarded in that army, he took an early occasion to explain in a public address the Government's policy in respect to that important matter, and in doing so declared that he was authorized to remove any one, high or low, who should at any time or in any way oppose or obstruct this policy, and that he should not fail to exercise his authority. Sherman, McPherson, Blair, Logan, and other leading officers were present and, while they had so far favored restricting the use of negroes to teamsters and laborers in the field or at most to the organization of heavy regiments for depot and garrison duty, they at once yielded their own sounder views and gave a ready assent to the new policy as announced by Thomas.

This speech attracted much attention at the time, and its boldness of tone may have strengthened the impression, which first got abroad when Dana joined the army, that either he or Thomas might

have authority to relieve even Grant and put McClernand or some one else in the place. It was a long distance from Washington, and there was but little communication from the army with that place. Grant was but a poor correspondent at best, and till Dana began sending his remarkable letters to Stanton,[1] there was more or less uncertainty prevailing as to the significance of two such influential agents of the War Department at the front. Speculation was rife and, although so far both Dana and Thomas expressed nothing but the most friendly feeling toward Grant, even Grant himself was not altogether sure of his position till he reached Smith's plantation near New Carthage, and began to see his way to a firm footing on the east side of the Great River.

The passage of the batteries by the gunboats and transports instantly cleared the situation. Canals and bayous were no longer necessary, and although the river was high and New Carthage could not be reached from the levee at the lower end of Bayou Vidal, except by boat, all became hopeful of getting forward with but little further delay. Fortunately it was believed that the river was at its highest, and that any change in the stage of the water must be for the better. Accordingly, as soon as we arrived at Smith's plantation, Grant directed me to find a boat and take him to Porter's flagship, some three miles below. Having, with but little delay, secured a skiff and crew of plantation negroes, we set out with General Thomas, making our way through the overflowed bottom by a tortuous creek to the river, and

[1] Dana's "Recollections of the Civil War." D. Appleton & Co., 1898.

thence down stream to the Admiral's flagship. The conference lasted several hours and, although night had come on and the Admiral was most pressing in his hospitality, Grant resolved to return to his own headquarters at the plantation. Porter, finding that he could not detain his guests, insisted upon giving him a naval cutter and crew for the return trip. It was arranged that I should lead the way, with our own boat, which, so long as we were in the open river, was plain enough. But in spite of the current and the night, dark as Erebus, my boat made the better speed, and by the time we turned into the creek Grant's was out of sight behind. Supposing that he or Thomas had not paid sufficient attention to land-marks to follow, I pushed through the tortuous creek and overhanging trees with a heavy rain falling and a boundless expanse of water on all sides, and reached headquarters at 10 P. M., believing that Grant would arrive in a few minutes. After waiting over half an hour in vain, Rawlins and I became alarmed and I set out again in search of him. In such darkness and such a waste of water almost any accident was possible, and hence I encouraged my crew to put forth their best efforts. Thirty minutes brought us to the open river and, with its swifter current behind us, a few more brought us to the first gunboat. Going on board to make inquiry, I found the missing party, much to my gratification, enjoying the hospitalities of the captain. The general seemed glad to see me. His naval crew had been unable to follow and had lost their way. Fearing he might have to wander around all night if he persisted in trying to find his own way, he decided to return to the fleet and wait till morning,

but soon as he saw me he expressed his desire to return, and in the same order as before we set out for the second time. By an hour and a half's hard rowing and careful piloting we reached headquarters at one o'clock in the morning, where the ever-vigilant Rawlins was waiting impatiently to receive us. Accustomed as I had been to boating in the high water of the Ohio in my boyhood, I thought but little of the adventure at the time, but it is easy to see now that had the general's cutter been capsized, rowed as it was by a crew of landsmen unused to such navigation, nothing could have saved him from drowning.

Withal, the incident was somewhat exciting to those immediately concerned. The greater power and width of the Mississippi at flood, the somber blackness of the night, made still blacker by the overhanging forest standing in a waste of water, the flash of lightning and the downpour of rain, with no noise but the rattling and dipping of our oars or the distant hooting of an owl, gave interest and emphasis to the real danger which surrounded Grant and his army in every stage of that most remarkable campaign. They well illustrate the difficulties which accompanied every movement in the Yazoo and Louisiana bottoms, and show how imperative it was that they should gain a footing on the uplands east of the great river.

My journal of those days contains many notes showing the difficulties of the march by the banks of Vidal, Negro, Mound, Gilbert, and Brushy bayous to the Mississippi levees below Vicksburg. The whole face of the country was under water. Having no pontoon train, the advance of the army, with

no boats except the flats gathered from the various plantations and no bridge materials except such as we obtained by tearing down plantation houses, the forward movement might well have been stopped at the very outset. With troops less capable and commanders less resolute and resourceful, we might well have been beaten before getting within reach of the enemy. But there was neither delay nor the thought of it. Three floating bridges, each over three hundred feet long, were built of flatboats and gin-house timbers, and in a few days we opened a practicable road crossing bayous and threading one of the most difficult regions that ever tested the resources of an army. When it is remembered that those bridges were built by green volunteers, who had never seen a bridge train nor had an hour's drill or instruction in bridge-building, some conception may be had of the quality of the men and officers who carried through that remarkable work.

Having given careful instructions for each bridge as I came to it, I left the details to my assistants, and under Grant's personal orders I crossed the Mississippi with a regiment of infantry and made a reconnoissance of the country between the mouth of the Big Black and Warrenton, for the purpose of seeing whether or not we could find a landing on the east bank from which we could reach the rear of Vicksburg along the peninsula between the two rivers. But in this region as well as in that west of the river the bottoms were several miles wide in places, and everywhere so much overflowed that it was impracticable to get to the highlands through them. During this reconnoissance I visited "Congo" plantation, where I found the negroes in great ex-

citement trying to remove their master's stock and household effects to the highlands. It was here that a negro shoemaker, calling himself Mason Jones, put himself under my protection and insisted upon becoming my body servant. As he proved himself to be faithful and intelligent, I took him with me everywhere till the end of the war, and then sent him to Illinois, where his family joined him and became good and prosperous citizens. It was he who cautioned me in the Valley of Virginia to take care of myself, just after a cannon shot had knocked over our dinner and scattered our campfire, for "if you get killed, gen'al, I can't stay in dis war nohow!" And it was his wife, Aunt Patsy, whose son "Italian" got into a neighborhood difficulty which in her words "came mighty nigh gettin' us all into de circus co'te."

But the most important discovery from the reconnoissance at the Congo plantation was that it assured us we could not reach the highlands between Vicksburg and Grand Gulf, but would have to run the batteries at the latter place and look for a landing farther down the river. Although Porter declined to enter the Big Black with his boats as I suggested, he undertook to silence the batteries at Grand Gulf, on the understanding when that was done that Grant should land a force and "take the place by assault". While Grant was dubious as to the result, he agreed to the proposition, but after five hours' bombardment in which all the fleet took a gallant part and not a single hostile gun, in the proper sense of the term, was disabled or silenced, the attempt was abandoned and we were again face to face with running the batteries. By this time

Rawlins and I had come to the conclusion that there should be no more delay for reconnoissance or bombardment, and that we should not only run the batteries again, but continue on down the river as far as Rodney if necessary. From all the information we had we felt assured that we should find neither guns nor rebel troops at that place, but an open road to the interior. With this assurance we urged Grant to cut loose with all the force the transports could carry and, at the first landing on the east side, to swing out into the open country toward Jackson without waiting for the rest of the army to join him. This was agreed to. The gunboats and the transports passed the batteries this time entirely without injury, and when an intelligent contraband informed us that there was a high-water landing and road at Bruinsburg only ten miles below by which we could reach the highlands dry-shod, we embarked the troops and made for that place. It required a good deal of resolution and steadiness of purpose to adopt that course. Our advanced division commander had begun to criticize and grumble, and although I reported this to Grant, it not only did not shake his resolution, but made him all the more determined to push into the interior from the first hard ground he could reach. Fortunately the advance troops reached the landing at an early hour and found it to be good; the road was dry and the defile through the hills a mile back was undefended. At last the way into the interior was open, and thenceforth the only question was to get the troops across the river and push them forward as fast as possible, to make good the footing thus offered us after four months of incredible labor.

Grant and his staff, leaving their own baggage, horses, and camp equipage behind, slept on board the steamboat on which they crossed the river on the last day of April. I occupied a pile of rope on the gunboat *Benton,* and was awake at the break of day. Hearing the booming of distant cannon, I borrowed a horse for Grant and another for myself from Colonel Mudd's Illinois Cavalry, and by 7 A. M., May 1, we were on the Bruinsburg road to the front.

VI

CHIEF TOPOGRAPHICAL ENGINEER AND INSPECTOR GENERAL

Bruinsburg — Port Gibson — Raymond — Jackson—Champion's Hill—Big Black Bridge—Assault on Vicksburg —General Lawler—Sergeant Griffith—General McClernand—Charles A. Dana.

The story of the campaign from Bruinsburg to Jackson and from Jackson to the rear of Vicksburg, with its masterly combinations and rapid marches, its notable victories at Port Gibson, Raymond, Jackson, Champion's Hill, and the Big Black; the capture of the state capital; the destruction of the railroads which centered there; and finally the investment and capture of Vicksburg with its garrison of thirty thousand men, July 4, 1863, constitutes the most brilliant chapter in our military annals. It has been told many times before and requires no repetition to bring it to the student's mind. From the time Grant's army crossed the Mississippi at Bruinsburg, sixty-five miles below Vicksburg, on April 30, till it shut Pemberton and his army up inside their fortifications, was just twenty days, and from the time the siege began till it ended on July 4, when the garrison marched out and stacked its arms, was just forty-five days more.

Nothing like this surrender had ever taken place on this continent, and, coming as it did on the heels of the great battle of Gettysburg, fought at almost the same time, it marked not only the high tide, but the beginning of the end of the Great Rebellion.

Throughout this campaign Grant remained the same modest, unassuming and self-poised man that he had shown himself to be in the Tennessee campaigns. He put on no airs and made no show of rank or superior authority. With a borrowed horse, no servant, and literally no baggage but a tooth brush, he gained the first battle at Port Gibson, and concentrated his army near Hankinson's Ferry on the Big Black, ready to advance either against Vicksburg or the capital of the state. Riding incessantly for the first three days and most of the nights, he gave a splendid example of just how a general should bear himself in an active and successful campaign.

During the battle of Port Gibson, which was fought mostly by McClernand's corps, Rawlins and I thought it a good time to bring about a *rapprochement* between Grant and his lieutenant. To that end we asked Grant to ride over and thank him for his good conduct and brilliant success, but, much to our surprise, he declined to do so, saying that McClernand had offended him seriously by asking permission to delay the crossing till Governor Yates of Illinois could review the troops, and, as if that were not enough, had that morning violated orders by encumbering his column with wagons which should have been left at the river during the preliminary movements. Finally, while the action was still under way and the result yet unset-

tled, Grant sent instructions to the artillery to harbor its ammunition, on hearing which, McClernand ordered it to continue firing, loudly declaring that he had fought the battle so far and fought it well, and would not be interfered with by anybody. Of course, the officer who carried Grant's order reported what McClernand had said and naturally this did not mend matters. In other words, the cocky corps commander, relying upon his understanding with the Washington authorities, as before explained, regarded himself in a measure, if not entirely, independent of the army commander and acted not only that day but throughout the campaign as though Grant's presence and his exercise of authority on the battlefield were in violation of his own privileges and rights. He was naturally a proud, austere, and imperious man, who took but little pains to conceal his feelings and acted always with noticeable reserve and hauteur toward Grant. How far he presumed in his own mind upon Grant's good nature or upon his reserve and self-control, as indicating a lack of self-respect and firmness, cannot be known, but if he expected to profit by the course he adopted he was inexcusably at fault.

Shortly after this incident, as Osterhaus and John E. Smith were about to make the final attack against the enemy, Governor Yates, who was still with the army, joined us at the edge of the battlefield. He was a breezy, picturesque, and gallant gentleman, and, like the leading politicians of the day, was always on the lookout for an opportunity to attract public attention. As the battle was clearly going our way, it evidently struck him that it of-

fered him an unusual chance for distinction. Riding alongside of me, he said: "Colonel, I believe I'll put myself at the head of one of our Illinois regiments and lead it into action. Don't you think that would be a good thing to do?"

Although the proposition was both novel and unnecessary, it struck me rather favorably and in a tone half jocular and half serious, I gave it my approval and advised him in words which Grant afterward made famous—to "go in!" Almost immediately the action became hot and I lost sight of the Governor, without knowing whether he had gone in or gone out. It so happened that I did not meet him again till the next day on the march, when he said with an air of evident satisfaction: "Well, Colonel, I am mighty glad I didn't go in with the boys yesterday afternoon, for those devilish rebels might have killed me!"

The effort that Rawlins and I made on this occasion to bring about a better understanding between Grant and McClernand was not only firmly rejected by Grant, but, as it turned out, it was followed by a determination on his part to keep a close watch and a steady hand over his self-constituted rival. From that day forth Grant not only maintained the most formal attitude toward McClernand, but, so far as practicable, refrained from meeting him in person or giving him written orders. His general practice was to send me with discretionary authority to see that he did the proper thing in coöperation with the commanders who were entitled to great confidence. But even this was not always effective.

At Champion's Hill, where McClernand a few

days later had the chance of a lifetime, he was so slow and cautious that he did practically nothing. Hovey, who commanded one of his divisions, got on his own account a prominent place in the battle, while A. J. Smith was detached to operate under Grant's immediate orders. Logan did well, as usual, while Osterhaus', Carr's, and Smith's divisions, later under McClernand's personal command, let pass a great opportunity to destroy Pemberton's army by striking it heavily on the right and rear, while the rest of the army was attacking in front. Two or three orders were given to put these divisions in, but in vain.

Again, at Big Black Bridge, Lawler's brigade of Carr's division played a most gallant and successful part, but it was solely on Lawler's initiative. That officer was a very remarkable volunteer tactician, an ex-captain of the Mexican War, a plain Illinois farmer all his life, with a fine literary taste, and a most gallant bearing. But, withal, he was a man of no pretensions either in manners or dress. His favorite uniform was a blue flannel shirt, on which he tacked his shoulder straps, and he was of such ample proportions that he always wore his sword hung by a strap over his shoulder. For some unknown reason Dana always called him "The High Dominie Dudgeon", and the flash of wit and poetry between them when they met was always most entertaining.[1] On the occasion referred to I met Lawler and my brother Bluford, his adjutant, on the field in their shirt sleeves, wet with perspiration and covered with dust, but both leading their men gallantly against the enemy. Their success was

[1] Wilson's "Life of Charles A. Dana," p. 225 *et seq.*

all their own, and neither had nor needed supervision from those in higher authority.[1]

It was of this quaint and fine old soldier that General Grant, during the Chattanooga campaign, while praising several Illinois generals, said:

"But when it comes to just plain hard fighting I would rather trust Old Mike Lawler than any of them."

Lawler, although a man of Falstaffian girth, was a strictly temperate man, a devout Catholic, and as imperturbable under fire as any "Ironsides." When asked to take a drink—not at all an unusual occurrence in the army—his invariable reply was: "No, thank you! I have a brother, I am sorry to say, who drinks enough for both of us."

To a profane member of his staff during the fighting days at Vicksburg, who was loudly violating the third commandment, the General said: "I am astonished to hear you praying at this time. I always say my prayers before going into battle."

To my brother Bluford, who in his first battle at Champion's Hill unconsciously dodged the singing rifle bullets, he sang out: "You d—d little fool, don't dodge! Don't you know when you hear the bullets they have already gone by?" Whether it cured the Captain of the habit I don't know, but Lawler himself always "stood four square" to all the breezes that blew.

In going to the front one morning, while passing another command on the march, a soldier was overheard to say to his comrade: "Bill, who is that old tub of guts? I'd hate to be in his place. He

[1] O. R. Series 1, Vol. XXIV, Part II, pp. 133-143, Lawler's report. Also Part I, p. 618, Carr's report.

won't last a minute under fire." Lawler instantly said to the member of his staff riding next to him: "Huh! D——d fool! I could lose two or three beefsteaks off my anatomy and not be hurt!" A fact which he had demonstrated at Donelson, where he was badly wounded but did not leave the field.

A few days later, May 22, in the general assault on the enemy's fortifications surrounding Vicksburg, Lawler's brigade, alone of the entire army, carried a substantial part of the works in its front. Sergeant Griffith, Twenty-second Iowa, with a handful of men, broke through the enemy's line into a salient redan, capturing it and its guns for a time, but he had not sufficient force without instant support to follow up his success. As the support was not forthcoming, the sergeant and his men, after sending their prisoners one by one to the rear and holding on under cover till night, withdrew to their own side of the works. Griffith, a fine, hearty Iowa lad of great courage, became a popular hero and was at once promoted to the rank of lieutenant. Shortly afterward General Grant designated him for appointment as cadet at West Point. Although full of deviltry, which he displayed whenever occasion offered, once climbing into the Academic Building and abstracting the examination programs for the benefit of his duller classmates, he graduated fifth in his class, entered the engineers, and several years after the war became one of my assistants on the improvements of the upper Mississippi. When I resigned from the army, he followed my example and became an able and brilliant railroad contractor, but his career was cut short by death from disease contracted in his new calling. It is due to Lawler's

memory to repeat that the Confederate general, Stephen D. Lee, commanding in Lawler's front, declared that Griffith's charge was made at the only point on the whole defensive line where our forces succeeded in breaking through that day. This was because Lawler ordered his colonels to quietly arouse their men before daylight and move them up stealthily under cover of darkness to a thicket on the hillside about fifty yards from the works, where they lay unobserved until the general assault was sounded at 10 A. M. To that end he carefully examined the intervening ground the evening before with his regimental commanders. Unfortunately, however, no provision was made by the division or corps commanders for the reënforcements which were necessary for the full success of such an assault. Hours before support could reach Lawler, and after his charge had spent itself, the enemy rallied and strongly reënforced that part of their line. Even to get in touch with the detachment holding the bastion it was necessary to advance nearly a quarter of a mile, for the most part under fire, and this was a hopeless task.[1]

It was mainly on Griffith's success at Vicksburg that McClernand based the claim that he had carried the enemy's works and called for reënforcements, which was unfortunately followed by a renewal of the attack all along the line that cost the army a great many men. For this McClernand was severely blamed at the time, because the second attack was far more hopeless than the first, but candor compels me to say that McClernand's conduct seems to have been no more blameworthy upon that

[1] O. R. Series 1, Vol. XXIV, part 1, pp. 178-79.

occasion than Sherman's or McPherson's. The fact is that neither corps commander made the proper provision for the contingency of success in the attack. Rifle pits and fieldworks were assaulted many times throughout the war, but were rarely ever carried. But few of our generals became proficient in the management of such serious work, and now that it is all over it can do no harm to say that Upton, of the National Army, greatly distinguished in all arms of the service, was the only one of them who thoroughly mastered that branch of the military art. He always made proper provision for success, for reënforcements, for coöperating movements and for all contingencies that could be foreseen. From the day he became a colonel he never once failed to break through the enemy's works or to make good his hold upon them, where he had been ordered and had sole charge of the arrangements. Hancock was next to him in this complicated work, but no other corps or division commander on either side ever equaled Upton in the uniform success which attended his efforts. He was a military enthusiast and student of extraordinary ability, courage, and judgment, and, young as he was, I have never doubted that when the war ended he was the best all-round soldier of his day.

When it is recalled that neither the brilliant Sherman nor the accomplished McPherson, both distinguished West Point men, had yet mastered the trick of carrying fortified positions by assault, it need not be thought strange that McClernand, the lawyer and politician, who acquired his first military training in the Black Hawk War, should have failed at this dangerous and complicated business.

He was naturally as able as the rest, but his temper, if not fate, was against him. A fortnight later I had occasion to carry an order from Grant, directing him to strengthen the detachment from his corps watching the Big Black at Hall's Ferry. I had known him from boyhood, and had corresponded with him. Twice in October, 1862, he requested Stanton to detail me to his staff. He had been, besides, a private in my father's company in the Black Hawk War, and we were, as I thought, on excellent terms. Grant and Rawlins evidently thought so, also, but when I delivered the order referred to above, I was greatly shocked, because, instead of receiving it kindly and signifying his obedience, he burst out with: "I'll be God damned if I'll do it—I am tired of being dictated to—I won't stand it any longer, and you can go back and tell General Grant!" He followed this up with a volley of oaths which seemed as though they might have been aimed as much at me as at our common chief. We were both mounted at the time, and, although surprised at the violent and insubordinate outburst, I replied:

"General McClernand, I am astonished at what you are saying. You surely do not understand the order I have given, and I'll repeat it: General Grant directs you to strengthen the outposts of your corps at Hall's Ferry, and you will disobey this order at your peril! And now, General, in addition to your highly insubordinate language, it seems to me that you are cursing me as much as you are cursing General Grant."

Then, reining my horse quickly alongside of his, I added:

"If this is so, although you are a major general, while I am only a lieutenant colonel, I will pull you off that horse and beat the boots off of you!"

This brought him to his senses, and, seeing the mistake he had made, he said at once:

"I am not cursing you. I could not do that. Your father was my friend and I am yours. I was simply expressing my intense vehemence on the subject matter, sir, and I beg your pardon."

But it was too late. He had exhausted my desire to keep the peace between him and General Grant, as well as my patience, and, although he followed his friendly assurances by inviting me to his camp to take a drink, I declined with the remark that I didn't drink, and galloped rapidly away, full of anger and resentment.

Arriving at headquarters, I told Rawlins and Grant of the disagreeable scene through which I had gone, concluding with the remark that the order need not be repeated in writing, but that I was tired of trying to keep the peace between headquarters and our political generals.

Thereupon Grant said: "While I shall not notice this violent outburst, I'll get rid of McClernand the first chance I get." Ever afterward when he heard an officer using profane language, as was the custom in the army, he would say, with a smile: "He's not cursing. He is simply expressing his intense vehemence on the subject matter!" It was a happy euphemism which saved him on many occasions from rough language when, if he had been a swearing man, he would have certainly yielded to temptation.

Dana, from the day he joined the staff, conceived a dislike to McClernand, and his dispatches to Stanton throughout the Vicksburg campaign were altogether unfavorable to him.[1]

A few days later the opportunity came for getting rid of this insubordinate and high-tempered corps commander. Shortly after the general assault on the fortifications of Vicksburg, McClernand issued a general order congratulating his corps, which he designated without authority as "the Army of the Mississippi," and through some fault of his own or of his adjutant general he failed to send a copy of the order, as required by army regulations, to headquarters, but did not fail to send it North for publication in the newspapers. In due time it came back to the army and both Sherman and McPherson made haste to send it to Grant with their protest against it, not only as an injustice to their respective corps, but as giving praise to the Thirteenth to which it was not fairly entitled. Carr, one of his own division commanders, later protested against statements in the order.[2] Their points were well taken and Grant was prompt to respond. He referred the matter at once to McClernand for an explanation. The latter replied without delay that his order was not only correctly printed, but that he was prepared to stand by it and its allegations.

This settled McClernand's fate. I was absent from camp that day till midnight, but the order relieving him had been prepared, and on my return, Rawlins, who remained up to tell me about it,

[1] O. R. Series 1, Vol. XXIV, Part I, pp. 74, 81, 84, 86.
[2] O. R. Series 1, Vol. 24, Part I, pp. 623-4.

handed it to me, recounting its purport and directing me to deliver it in person the first thing in the morning. Recognizing its importance and fearing that some contingency might occur that night or in the early dawn, which would involve a sortie or a battle in which McClernand would doubtless display his usual gallantry, which in turn might cause Grant to delay, if not cancel the order, I said to Rawlins: "Why shouldn't I deliver it to-night?" This brought the reply: "Because you are tired and to-morrow will do." We then discussed the subject from every point of view, with the result that he yielded and I turned out the provost marshal with a sergeant and four men, and, after putting on full field uniform, mounted a fresh horse and set out on my mission. I reached McClernand's headquarters between 1 and 2 A. M., and, after waiting till the orderly on duty could arouse the general, and when he had clad himself properly, I was shown in. With all his violence he was a punctilious man, and I found him in full uniform, his sword lying across the table with two lighted candles in front of him.

The provost marshal and his squad were within call, and, after saluting him, I said: "General, I have an important order for you which I am directed to deliver into your hands and to see that you read it in my presence, that you understand it, and that you signify your immediate obedience to it." I handed him the sealed envelope, watched him adjust his glasses, and then open and read it. When he caught its purport, almost instantly he said: "Well, sir! I am relieved!" And then, as if taking it all in, he added almost in the same breath: "By

God, sir, we are both relieved!"—meaning Grant as well as himself.

Seeing that he understood the order correctly, I added:

"General, I am furthermore instructed to say that your functions as a corps commander in this army are at an end. A. J. Smith, next in rank, has been already notified, and, in case any emergency arises to-night, he will take charge of the corps. You will exercise none of the functions of a general, but you will proceed at your earliest convenience to your home in Illinois and there await the orders of the War Department."

Perceiving that there was nothing left for him but to obey, he expressed his satisfaction with the order relieving him from a disagreeable situation and signified his intention of leaving for home early after daylight. As this was exactly what was desired, I took my leave, and, although he lived to a ripe old age, I never saw him again. With all his violence of temper and his lack of military training and discipline, he was a patriot and a man of strong, virile character, who, with an ordinary degree of self-control, would have come out of the war as one of its real heroes. His support of the Administration at the outbreak of the rebellion and during the war rendered it a great and valuable political service, second only to that rendered by Douglas, and there can be but little doubt that both the President and Secretary of War were partial to him, and had encouraged him with the hope, if not the formal promise, of the command of the expedition to open the Mississippi River.[1]

[1] O. R. Series 1, Vol. XVII, Part 2, pp. 275.

The student of history, curious as to the details of this interesting episode, which interrupted the harmonious coöperation of the corps commanders in the Vicksburg campaign and influenced the course of events and which, but for the patriotism of those concerned, aided by Grant's good sense and patience, might have led to disaster, will find the conflicting views of the chief actors fully set out in the Official Records,[1] with a violent attack upon Grant's personal habits.

Having disposed of McClernand as a disturbing element in that army, I shall now return to the consideration of other personal features of the campaign.

[1] O. R. Series 1, Vol. XXIV, Part 1, p. 169.
This also contains McClernand's extreme statement that Grant was indebted to the forbearance of officers under his command for his retention in the public service.

VII

THE VICKSBURG CAMPAIGN

The Black Belt—Lorenzo Thomas—Cross the Mississippi—Bayou Pierre—Grand Gulf—Captain Badeau—McPherson at Raymond—Grant at Jackson—Champion's Hill—Passage of the Big Black—The American volunteer.

The preliminary operations of the Vicksburg campaign were mostly in northeastern Louisiana and that part of Mississippi in which the slave population was densest and the white population richest. The plantations in the bayou region were large, the land most fertile, and the buildings commodious. As the troops were struggling to make their way over the almost impassable mud roads, I generally supervised the bridge building, and this made it necessary for me to pass from one column to the other. Dana, who came from Washington as "the eyes of the Government," and a couple of orderlies were my only companions, and, as we necessarily traveled light, we made it a rule to stop at the most opulent mansion within reach when night overtook us. And it gives me pleasure to record that, while all the proprietors, and especially the ladies, were undisguised rebels, they never failed to give us a hospitable reception. This

may have been largely due to a desire for protection, but it was none the less acceptable on that account. After bridging Roundaway Bayou, we put up at the home of Mrs. Amis, a most charming and accomplished woman, whose stately mansion was embowered in flowers and ornamental trees, backed by a village of comfortable negro quarters. Here we saw the most attractive and successful features of slavery. Luxury was apparent in the whole establishment, and as far as we could see neither want nor suffering had yet reached that region. The family cook, if not a *cordon bleu,* was a past mistress of the art, and her broiled chickens, bacon, and hominy muffins were a delight neither of us ever forgot. While the place was protected as long as we were in the neighborhood, it probably suffered at the hands of the following Yankees. The slaves, who had been docile and apparently content to that day, packed up their poor belongings and, with their pickaninnies on their backs or trudging by their sides, followed the flag which brought freedom to them. And this was the rule throughout both states. Wherever our columns went there freedom went also, and every colored man and woman that could walk eagerly embraced it. It was pitiful to see their ignorant upturned faces as they struggled through the mud beside or behind our columns to an unknown destination, where they were sure they would be free. Many times as I rode by them I called out as cheerily as I could: "Wha' you-all gwine?" And as many times the answer came back ignorantly but hopefully: "Gwine along down, Massa—gwine along down wid you-all!"

When it is remembered that it was in this region, the heart of the Black Belt, that slavery had done its best, it will be seen that the presence of our army was the precursor of agricultural disorganization and distress as well as of emancipation. Farm work was practically at an end and idleness, the negro's nearest conception of freedom, everywhere prevailed. This was soon followed, however, by the presence of Lorenzo Thomas, who, having failed to gain Stanton's approval as adjutant general, was sent to the Mississippi to organize negro regiments and look after the freedmen. He did his work, for lack of experience and means, with only moderate success, but he took the responsibility for it from the army commander and eliminated the negro question as far as the western army was concerned.

After we crossed the Mississippi he traveled with us for a while, and it was in the midst of the campaign, with all its demands, that Rawlins and I concluded that Grant should have a private secretary to look after his personal correspondence, and agreed that I should bring the matter to his attention. I did this as soon as possible after we secured a footing on the Mississippi uplands.

As I was the only regular officer then present and was always well mounted and ready for service, I generally rode next to Grant on the march, and this gave me a rare opportunity for personal as well as official conversation. The day after the battle of Port Gibson and the passage of Bayou Pierre, as we were making our way through the forest to Rocky Springs, I said:

"General, last night's experience has convinced

both Rawlins and me that you ought to have a military secretary. As both he and Bowers have all they can do and as I am frequently away, you should have a special officer to look after your correspondence."

"Yes," said the General, "I have been thinking of that myself. Do you know anybody who will suit?"

"Oh, yes," said I, "there are plenty of them who, like Lincoln's coon dog, are good for nothing else, but you can't always get them when you want them. The best man in my mind now is Captain Badeau, A. A. D. C., who was a reporter with us at Port Royal, and is now on T. W. Sherman's staff with Banks. Perhaps you know him. He was with Sherman during the Corinth campaign and you must have seen him."

"No, I don't recall him. What sort of a looking man was he?"

"He was a short, stoop-shouldered, red-headed fellow, who wore glasses."

"Oh, yes, I remember him—a little pale, blue-eyed man, who wore spectacles and looked like a bent fo'-pence. Do you think he'll do?"

I then told him of Badeau's classical education, wide acquaintance with leading people, his literary experience, and his great desire to be of use. I pointed out that he had absolutely no military aptitudes, and "would never make a soldier in his life," and that if he wasn't fit for a secretary he wasn't fit for anything connected with the service. I told the General in addition how he had endeared himself to us all in the Port Royal expedition, and how we had united in recommending him to the Presi-

dent for a commission, how the commission had been issued, and how Sherman had taken him on his staff to Shiloh, Corinth, and New Orleans.

This settled it, and when I got through the General said: "I guess he'll do. Please write a note to the Hippo-John-Thomas (the playful name by which he frequently referred to Adjutant General Thomas) and ask him to make an order directing Captain Badeau to report to me in the field at the earliest possible day."

I wrote the request at the first halt and the order was duly made, but, as ill fortune would have it, the very day Badeau received it he was shot through the foot, while his chief lost a leg, leading the assault at Port Hudson. In consequence of this wound, which proved exceedingly severe and slow to heal, Badeau was invalided and did not report to Grant for duty till the latter had been still further promoted and had assumed personal command of the Union armies in Virginia. Badeau thus realized the dream of his life, and it is but just to add that he proved himself not only a faithful secretary but a painstaking and faithful military historian to the lieutenant general whom he ultimately came to regard as possessed of every virtue and as in every way the greatest man he had ever known.

There will be many occasions to mention Badeau hereafter, for he was by no means without influence or ambition. But unhappily he proved to have weaknesses which none of his military friends, and I, least of all, had ever suspected. Although possessed of genuine scholarship and many accomplishments, he was essentially a vain and weak man, who owed everything to his chief and forgot some

of it in the hour of adversity which finally overtook them both.

It will be remembered that the first consideration in beginning the campaign east of the Great River was to minimize the impedimenta and get as many fighting men into the first battle as possible. Everything and everybody not absolutely needed at the front was left behind. Even Dana, the special commissioner of the War Department, and Fred Grant, the General's eldest son, then a lad of fourteen, had to steal their passage across the river and make their way to the sound of the guns on foot. But they were not laggards, and although it was only the first day of May and the heat was intense they caught up with the army while it was gaining its first victory. On the road they helped themselves to a pair of superannuated carriage horses, too old to work, and, with blind bridles and played-out saddles, finished the last stage of their journey without the fatigue of walking.

One of the first prisoners of the day was a smart, well-mounted young Confederate officer, who was brought at once to Grant's headquarters, where he was, of course, well treated. His welcome was so informal and hearty that he not only soon became much at his ease, but felt so encouraged that he asked General Grant, who had already admired his horse, that he might be allowed to keep it. He urged that it was private property which he had bred himself, and to which he had become much attached. It was a moving appeal, but the General replied, with a gentle smile:

"Yes, my young friend, I understand your feelings, but as we are now in need of horses and yours

would just suit Mr. Dana, the commissioner of the War Department, I must ask you to turn it over to him. In exchange I will give you an order on the Confederate authorities for an excellent horse of my own, which one of your erring fellow countrymen took a few months ago, with a part of my headquarters at Holly Springs."

The young man smiled faintly at the General's joke, and slowly but sadly dismounted, with newer but more exact knowledge of how the Yankees made war support war. The horse proved a satisfactory mount for Dana till the end of the campaign.

It was such little things as this that cheered us on our way. Grant was an adept at them, and although kind and sympathetic to an unusual degree never failed to profit by advantages which came his way, no matter how small they might be. Cheerful, kind-hearted, and solicitous for the comfort of those about him, he was a most agreeable companion both on the march and in camp. He loved good horses and good horsemen, and always had a kind word for the man or officer who had a good mount and took good care of it. Frequently while marching through wooded country he would say: "Wilson, there's a fallen tree you haven't jumped yet. Put your horse at it and let us see how he takes it," and he always praised the horse. Seeing him upon such occasions no one would have ever thought he had any more care on his mind than a school boy, especially if the marches and the combinations were going to his satisfaction. Plain and simple in his manners, kind and considerate to the officers and men of his staff, and most gentle and sympathetic with the poor people of the country, it was like a continuous picnic

to campaign with him when there was nothing more serious on hand than marching through a smiling land in the springtime. He gave the least trouble possible about camping or breaking camp, merely indicating in a general way what he wanted and leaving all the details to Rawlins and the proper officers of the staff.

It should be noted that in our anxiety to forward troops, ammunition, and provisions, we left our headquarters baggage wagons, camp equipage, and horses, with the impedimenta of the army, on the west side of the Mississippi. They did not join us till May 8. We had been fully a week in the enemy's country, riding borrowed cavalry horses, and literally "making war support war," eating where we could get food, and sleeping where we could find shelter. Grant and his staff shared the hardships and privations of the troops, but being few in number generally occupied farm houses at night, receiving shelter and hospitality in exchange for protection. It was an exciting and encouraging time during which the General displayed all his amiable qualities to perfection.

In repairing the bridge over the north fork of the Bayou Pierre after the battle of Port Gibson, Rawlins and I worked all night, taking neither rest nor sleep till it was certain that the bridge would serve its purpose. Without delay the marching columns were well under way to the front. It was now 5 o'clock and broad daylight, but the excitement was over and we had at last become sensible of fatigue. We therefore returned to headquarters nearby and threw ourselves down for rest. The establishment was, however, already astir, the cooks

were serving breakfast, the servants were packing, and the orderlies saddling and leading out the horses. Under these conditions both silence and sleep were impossible. In the midst of it all we heard the General, as he was mounting, caution the staff and orderlies not to call us, but leave us to get our "sleep out." Under such circumstances every soldier will understand we could neither sleep nor stay behind. We therefore waited only till our companions were gone, when we mounted and shortly afterward overtook them well on the road to Willow Springs. That afternoon we rode with Grant to our new base at Grand Gulf, where we found the navy in possession. The guns had already been branded: "Captured by the Mississippi Squadron under command of Rear Admiral David D. Porter," but inasmuch as the enemy had blown up his batteries between 3 and 4 A. M. of May 2, this display legend struck us as hardly fair to the army. Grant, however, passed it over with a smile. The rebel garrison held on till 8 P. M. of that day, when it became certain that Bowen had been defeated and that this outlying detachment would be captured unless it made haste to rejoin Pemberton's main army in the field. This it did by a rapid march to the rebel bridge of boats at Hankinson's Ferry. Thus our line of communications was shortened and the two armies were brought face to face twelve or fifteen miles in the interior on the lower reach of the Big Black.

Grant, Rawlins, and I worked till after midnight of the 3rd on board Porter's flagship, writing orders and dispatches, and when every disposition that could be thought of had been duly provided for, we

mounted and rode back to the army, which we found in camp near Hankinson's Ferry at four o'clock on the morning of the 4th. As all the houses in the neighborhood were occupied by those who got there before us, we unsaddled, spread our blankets, and threw ourselves down on the porch of a plantation house for rest. Grant was with us, tired and sleepy, but contented. We slept till the smell of breakfast and the rising sun awoke us. We remained in that region for about a week, engaged in watching the enemy while hurrying forward our whole army for the next step in the campaign.

The first important point occupied after the battle of Port Gibson was Willow Springs, between Bayou Pierre and the Big Black, covering Grand Gulf. The next was Rocky Springs, eight miles farther to the northeast. From these points detachments were thrown out to the left toward Hankinson's, Harmer's, and Hall's Ferries, while the Thirteenth Corps moved forward, its left skirting the river, its main body generally on the direct road through Cayuga and Auburn toward Edward's Depot. This naturally gave the impression that Grant intended to force a crossing of the Big Black and move directly against Vicksburg, while his real purpose was to screen the movement of his main column to the right through Utica and Raymond to Clinton on the east and west railroad.

Sherman, who had been left behind, partly because of his disapproval of the campaign and partly to still further confuse the enemy by a demonstration against Hayne's Bluff, was the last to join the army in the field. Naturally his march was so directed after crossing the river that he could sup-

port either column as might be necessary and finally take position on McPherson's right at Raymond. The city of Jackson, fourteen miles farther east, was, however, the chief railroad center in all that region as well as the capital of the state and the principal depot of supplies for the Confederates. It was, therefore, according to the art of war, the first strategic objective of the campaign, and till it was firmly in our hands and its bridges, depots, and supplies were destroyed, there would necessarily be danger of a concentrated and effective movement against the flank and rear of our columns from that quarter.

McPherson's advance under Logan first encountered the enemy on May 12 in force two or three miles from Raymond, about fifteen miles from Jackson, and, after a spirited fight, drove him in confusion from the field. Anticipating this affair, Dana and I left Grant on the main road from Auburn for the same place, coming up with McPherson at dusk just after he had beaten the enemy, four or five thousand strong, and was going into camp for the night. As he had gained an easy victory, which it was important to improve, after congratulating him and praising his work, I directed him in Grant's name to push on at an early hour next morning to Clinton on the Jackson and Vicksburg Railroad, hardly seven miles farther to the northeast. Much to my surprise, he said pointblank he would be damned if he'd do any such thing, that he was not strong enough to venture so far alone, and besides he didn't intend that his men should do all the fighting for that army.

This was such an unexpected and insubordinate

answer from a West Point man, who was justly regarded as an ideal soldier, that I expressed my amazement in terms he could not fail to understand. Deliberately repeating the order, and calling his attention to the penalty of disobedience, I whirled my horse about and, accompanied by Dana, galloped through the dark to General Grant, whom we found in camp near the place we had left him. After reporting the spirited victory at Raymond and pointing out the important positions on the map, I recited the order I had given in his name to McPherson and asked him to confirm it in writing. This he did at once and was about to send it by another officer, when I said: "No, General, give it to me. I have particular reasons for desiring to deliver it in person." Thereupon Dana and I, mounting fresh horses, rode back to McPherson and gave him Grant's written order about midnight, but withal he held on at that place till after nine o'clock the next morning, and did not reach Clinton till three o'clock in the afternoon the next day. When I overtook him with Grant early in the forenoon, he seemed to have forgotten his petulant and unsoldierlike answer of the night before, but made no effort to quicken his march. His movement throughout was culpably slow, but as there was no enemy to resist him, slow as it was, it gave us indisputed possession of the railroad and interposed an entire army corps between Johnston and Pemberton. The next day, in pursuance of orders, he started early, but still moved slowly and cautiously toward Jackson, where he might have cut off Johnston's retreat to the northward had he marched with proper celerity. As it was, he merely left the direct road from

Raymond to Jackson clear for Sherman's corps and enabled the latter to occupy that important center without much fighting, but with some delay accompanied by a good deal of noisy cannonading. Although the latter did but little harm, it had the effect of postponing McPherson's detour north of the town and thus gave Johnston time to withdraw by the Canton road before his retreat in that direction could be seriously interfered with.

Up to the evening of May 12, when McPherson gained his victory over Bowen at Raymond, Grant had formed no other plan than to break the Vicksburg and Jackson Railroad at Clinton and then turn toward Vicksburg to confront Pemberton wherever he might be found. But while Dana and I were returning to headquarters from Raymond the first time, we considered the whole situation and concluded that, Jackson being the principal railroad crossing and the strategic center of the state, Grant should order each of his army corps promptly toward that place, drive off or disperse the rebel force, occupy the city, destroy the military stores and supplies which might be found, burn the Pearl River Railroad bridge, and effectively break up the railroads centering at that place. It was evident that this course would seriously disconcert and delay the enemy and correspondingly facilitate our own operations, and, accordingly, after explaining it fully to Rawlins and securing his approval, I laid it before Grant. I briefly indicated the extent of McPherson's victory as well as the orders I had given for following it up, pointed out his indisposition to obey them unless heavily reënforced, and then advised Grant to move his whole army toward

Jackson and take that place before turning to the west. Without asking a question or raising an objection, he formally directed McPherson to push forward by the way of Clinton, Sherman by the Raymond road to Jackson, while McClernand should move by his right flank to Raymond and there hold himself in readiness to support either McPherson or Sherman as might become necessary.

During the whole of that night no question was raised as to the propriety of these dispositions, but by noon the next day, after every corps was in motion, Grant for the first time expressed regret that he had ordered everything so far to the east. And during the afternoon he remarked to me more than once that he wished he had not sanctioned the movement to Jackson, but whether this was due to the slowness with which his orders were executed, or to a doubt as to their wisdom, he did not explain. After he had captured the place, however, he realized that Jackson was his opponent's center of intelligence as well as of operations and supply, and not only became convinced that he had done right in going there, but never again expressed doubt in reference to the subject. The subsequent course of the campaign made it certain that his strategy in this case was correct, and that he had come to a wise decision a few days before in declining to weaken his command by sending any part of it to join Banks. He reached this conclusion in the course of a discussion with me, and it was then embodied in a formal letter which I wrote by his direction and dispatched to Banks by Captain Ulffers, one of my engineer assistants, who made his way by horse to Grand

Gulf, and thence down the river on a steam tugboat furnished by Admiral Porter.

Immediately after entering Jackson, Grant established headquarters at the principal hotel, a favorable position from which to gather information and to supervise the destruction necessary for the further success of his own army. Perhaps the most fortunate incident of the day was the capture of a late dispatch from Johnston, directing Pemberton to cross the Big Black and fall upon Grant's rear. This hastened the burning of the railroad bridge across Pearl River, the destruction of the rolling stock and the enemy's supplies, and the countermarch and concentration of our army at Champion's Hill, about six miles east of Edward's Station. No time was lost in this change from front to rear, but every soldier as well as every general, including McPherson, did his best to get strung out on the road and headed for Pemberton's army, which they were now sure of meeting in the open on fair and equal terms.

Grant, with his staff and escort, remained with Sherman's Corps in the town overnight. All communication with the North had been cut off since we left Cayuga, no dispatches except from his own subordinate could reach us, and none could be sent away. So there was nothing left for Grant but to gather information, make orders, and superintend the work of the destroyers. Although Jackson was the first capital of an interior state occupied by us, it was in those days a raw, rambling Southern town, mostly of cheap frame houses, with here and there a pretentious brick store, or a still more pretentious residence or public building, all of which

were protected, as far as possible, from fire and marauders. We, of course, took possession of the post office and the mails, from which we got a good lot of interesting Confederate correspondence, treasury drafts, and money.

The next morning before leaving I asked the hotel keeper for our bill. He replied breezily enough: "Sixty-five dollars," doubtless expecting his pay in national currency, but when I handed him a brand new one-hundred-dollar Confederate note his face took on a disappointed look as he said: "Oh, if you pay in Confederate money, it will be ninety-five dollars." To this I answered: "That's all right, and never mind the change!" But unfortunately for the landlord one of his neighbors was a witness to the transaction and the colloquy, and with true intolerance made haste to report them to his fellow townsmen, through whom it promptly reached the rebel authorities. It was a fatal but perhaps an unconscious blunder, for it was a public admission that Southern currency was at a heavy discount and Yankee money at a corresponding premium, and this was at that stage of the war an unpardonable sin. Accordingly, we had hardly got out of the city when, as we afterward learned, the hotel was set on fire and speedily reduced to ashes, but whether this quickened the patriotism or aroused the enmity of the hotel keeper we never knew.

It will be remembered that this was about the middle of May, 1863, and looking back upon it after nearly half a century, it must be regarded as a striking commentary upon the hopes of the rebellion.

The battle of Champion's Hill was fought on

May 16. Grant had concentrated three army corps, with not far from forty-five thousand men, within close supporting distance of each other, while Pemberton, with twenty-five, and Johnston, with ten or fifteen thousand men at most, were separated by thirty-five or forty miles of poor country, and neither force strong enough to make head against his confident opponent. Johnston's orders on this occasion, as well as throughout the campaign, were well enough, but they were in every instance too late to meet the rapidly changing condition of affairs. Grant, in the midst of Johnston's scattered divisions, had the short line to all possible points of the field, except Vicksburg, and, aided by his own staff, as well as by the quickened movements of both Sherman and McPherson, he was enabled in every instance to "get there first with the most men." Had McClernand been as active and aggressive as he should have been, and promptly put in, when ordered, his three other divisions, idle throughout the fight, Pemberton's army might have been taken both in flank and rear, as well as in front, and captured or at least completely scattered at Champion's Hill.

The capture of the *tête de pont* at the railroad crossing of the Big Black by Lawler the next day has already been sufficiently described, and as this opened the way to Vicksburg and made it easy to bridge the river wherever the Union columns might come to it, the rest of the field operations were simple enough for all concerned. But the night we reached the Big Black was a particularly busy one for me.

We had but one regular pontoon train in that

army, and as Sherman's advance now in the right front was hastening its march to the river at Bridgeport on the direct road to Hayne's Bluff, the future base of supplies, the train was sent to him. The bridge was promptly laid, and by the time Pemberton was safe inside his works, Sherman was well on his way to the new base on the Yazoo, which, before noon of the next day, was safely within his control. But McClernand's corps on the railroad, and McPherson's, with its right at Amsterdam, had also to cross the river without delay, and to this end it was necessary to build three additional bridges out of such materials as could be found at hand. The duty of designing and supervising their construction was mine. Fortunately, the task turned out to be a simple one. The first bridge was made of the dry trestlework timbers, which were cut down, dragged to the water one by one, rafted into place and kept steady by longitudinal side rails, all lashed firmly together and connected at both ends with proper land approaches. The actual work was most efficiently directed by Lieutenant Hains of the regular engineers.

The second bridge, two miles above, was made of cotton bales fastened end to end with a framework of scantling taken from nearby plantation houses and covered by joists and flooring held together by rack lashings applied in the usual manner.

The third, at Amsterdam, was like the first, but the dry timbers composing it were obtained by tearing down cotton gins and barns in and near the village, dragging them to the river, and making a solid raft of them across the sluggish stream. The practical work on the second and third was ably and

rapidly done by Captain Hickenlooper, McPherson's chief engineer, and all were ready for the troops to begin crossing before sun-up. Each served its purpose perfectly. Counting these improvised bridges, as well as those used between Milliken's Bend, New Carthage, and Bruinsburg on the west side of the Mississippi, there were between five thousand and six thousand feet of such bridges constructed during the Vicksburg campaign, and what is still more noteworthy is the fact that most of them were built during the night, so that no part of the army was compelled to delay its march while the bridges were under construction.

While the work was under way, Grant, Rawlins, Dana, and I spent the time together, passing from bridge site to bridge site, encouraging officers and men in their novel and necessary work. And no one could witness what was done on the Big Black without conceiving the deepest admiration for the American volunteer soldier and his unequaled capacity for the practical work of bridge building. It was only necessary to indicate and briefly explain what was wanted and leave him to do the rest. Other soldiers may be as courageous as he, but none can beat him in the general business of campaigning. He is at all times alert, active, and intelligent, and, I must add, I never saw a man or an officer of volunteers hesitate to obey orders. All he ever needs is reasonable certainty as to what is expected of him and then, if fairly well instructed and led, he is not only obedient but invincible. As General Grant used to say, "the common soldiers are as smart as town folks," and when the campaign is going right, which they are quick to perceive, they show their satisfaction

by the cheerfulness with which they march and the spirit with which they fight. All this was especially noticeable in the campaign east of the river which, from start to finish, was as gay and far more exciting than a picnic excursion, while its skirmishes and battles were "gentle and joyous jousts" which would have gladdened the hearts of the Knights at Ashby de la Zouche.

VIII

SIEGE AND CAPTURE OF VICKSBURG

First assault—Complete investment—Hot weather—Grant rides the lines—McClernand relieved—Close investment—Pemberton surrenders—Reorganization of volunteer army.

Grant's army, having closed in on Vicksburg, made a spirited effort the next morning to rush the enemy's entrenchments, but owing principally to the rough and unknown ground, covered by fallen trees and entanglements, the assault was necessarily too broken and disjointed to succeed. It was justified, however, by the chance that it would find the enemy too much discouraged and demoralized to make an effective defense or too much spread out to fully cover his whole line. According to precedent such a dash might have succeeded the evening before, immediately after our troops arrived on the ground, but the marching columns had to find their places and deploy, which on a strange terrain took too much time. Later in the war, darkness, which came on before the troops got fully into position, might have favored a successful attack, as at Selma and Columbus, in 1865, but in May, 1863, no one had had sufficient experience to venture upon such an undertaking. Besides the troops, having been march-

ing and fighting constantly for three weeks, were both tired and short of regular supplies, and this made it advisable to give them a rest while roads were being opened and rations, ammunition, and clothing were coming forward from the transports at Chickasaw Landing.

Within three days all wants were sufficiently supplied to warrant a general assault, but the enemy had also pulled himself together and strengthened his position to such an extent as to make it secure. The assault was made, and although the national troops reached the entrenchments at several salients, and actually broke through at one, the general result was a complete failure, the details and causes of which have already been sufficiently set forth elsewhere in this narrative.

A complete investment and a regular siege necessarily followed, during which the officers and men displayed the same high qualities that characterized their deeds in the previous stages of the campaign. It will be remembered that there were present at first only six, and at no time more than eight, West Point officers, including Grant, and from first to last not a single experienced engineer soldier. But withal the siege operations, including sapping, mining, the construction of roads, approaches, shelters, parallels, *places d'armes,* and siege materials of all kinds, including even wooden siege mortars, were carried forward with as much order, regularity, and perfection as would have been practicable in any European army. It was slow, heavy, and exacting work, which tried the patience and strength of all from highest to lowest. The hot weather of June was at hand and soon began to tell heavily upon the spirits

of the army. The excitement of a dashing campaign had died out, and while the health of the men remained singularly good for the climate, the lack of vegetables and seasonable food, combined with the work and restraint of the siege, soon brought about a feeling of lassitude and depression from which none but the toughest and most buoyant were exempt. Staff and line officers suffered alike. Doctors and caterers coöperated with each other, and Doctor Kittoe, our staff surgeon, whose people had served in India, prescribed curries and red pepper for the messes that could get them, but at best they proved to be palliatives, not remedies.

Even Grant himself, when the weather was hottest and things were dullest, felt the depression and longed for a change. Before the end of the first week in June he started by steamer to visit an outlying detachment on the Yazoo, but before reaching his destination he "fell ill," which, but for the timely action of Dana and the firmness and devotion of Rawlins, might have proved a great misfortune both to Grant and his army. It was upon this occasion that Rawlins, in the late and silent hours of the night, wrote his remarkable letter of June 6, 1863,[1] appealing to Grant's sense of duty and propriety. And it was the next morning that this fearless and faithful staff officer took measures for the exclusion of wine and liquor from the headquarters encampment by personally searching every suspected tent and ruthlessly breaking every bottle

[1] Dana's "Recollections of the Civil War," p. 82 *et seq.*, Wilson's "Life of John A. Rawlins." "From Chattanooga to Petersburg Under Generals Grant and Butler," by William Farrar Smith, Houghton, Mifflin & Co., pp. 179, 180.

he found over a nearby stump. That he did this without resistance from any quarter shows that his action was not only pardonable but necessary. It is pleasant to add that, although Grant said something about keeping a case of champagne, which a friend had sent him to celebrate the capture of Vicksburg with, he allowed Rawlins to have his way without further objection.

When it is recalled that this episode became known to the leading generals of the army, all of whom fully approved Rawlins' intervention, the character of the transaction will be better understood. Human nature in soldiers as well as in common people is a complex and puzzling thing, but it generally bends to the will of a masterful man.

As the interested reader will find the details of this siege and of the final surrender on July 4, 1863, sufficiently set forth in the military histories of the day, I shall confine myself to such personal incidents as seem worthy of attention.

After the failure to capture Vicksburg by assault and the several army corps and divisions had taken up their definite positions within the lines of circumvallation and countervallation, it became Grant's custom to ride the lines daily and mine to accompany him when I had no special duty to take me elsewhere. On the first of these rides, just after reaching the Hall's Ferry road and turning towards the besieged city, we met two elderly women walking to a neighbor's, and as we saluted them politely one of them raised her eyes and hesitatingly said to the General, who was, as usual, smoking, and whose well-worn blouse showed no sign of rank:

"Soldier, please give me a cigar?"

At this the General reined in his horse, and, thrusting his hand into his side pocket, took out a half dozen Havanas and, politely handing them to her, passed on up the road.

I, however, remained at a halt till he got out of earshot, when I said:

"Madam, you had better make those cigars go as far as possible, for General Grant will not be coming this way every day to keep you supplied."

A few rods farther on we turned into a stately, white mansion, over which a field-hospital flag was flying, for the purpose of seeing its condition. We had hardly dismounted and got inside when one of the ladies whom we had just met came forward in a state of confusion, and, after offering her apologies for her friend who had addressed the General in such familiar terms, explained that the mansion was known as Magnolia Hall, and belonged to Mr. Latham, her husband, and she made haste to present us to him and her family. We found in the drawing room several charming young women, all of whom, except a visitor from Long Island, were sympathizers with the Southern cause. They were, however, well-bred and accomplished, and it was pleasant to reassure and protect them. I shall not add that the certainty of finding them there afterwards made us more frequent visitors than we otherwise should have been, but I cheerfully admit that we never rode that way without stopping to pay our respects to the ladies and to enjoy their witty but disloyal sallies.

The owner was a planter, past the military age, but, notwithstanding the fact that we had every as-

surance of his loyalty and good will, I learned long years afterward that he had been paid most inadequately for the use of his house and nothing whatever for the injury done his furniture, bedding, carpets, and hangings by the sick and wounded who filled his luxurious rooms. It is sad to relate that the house burned down shortly after peace was declared, and the owner, who lost his slaves and his lands, died impoverished, while his daughters, although married, were scattered and embittered for life. I am sorry to add that they never recovered from the losses inflicted on them and their helpless children by the war. Thus the innocent are too frequently made to suffer more than the guilty, and with all my experience I know of no case more pitiful than the one I have just described.

Fortunately, the grounds occupied by the opposing forces in and about Vicksburg were with this exception completely deserted by the inhabitants, and we had no other case brought so forcibly to our notice till after the place had surrendered, when it became our duty as well as our pleasure to console and feed the destitute and to heal the wounds of war as far as circumstances would permit.

After the siege was well under way, we varied our rides occasionally by going toward the landing for a swim in Chickasaw Bayou, or one of its clear, cool lagoons. The country was covered by a dense forest and, at places in the river valley, by extensive canebrakes, but was quite free of guerrillas, hence the riding and swimming were entirely safe except for our own marauders. Dana and I were one day threatened by a small party of the latter outside of camp lines, and although one of them

struck me with an iron bucket I managed to hold them in check while Dana galloped to headquarters and brought the provost guard. As I was unarmed, it looked for a while as though I might be roughly handled, but, fortunately, the guard came in time to prevent any further violence.

One of our rides extended to Mrs. Johnson's house on the Yazoo, seven or eight miles from camp as the crow flies, and as the scenery was picturesque and the shade of the overhanging trees most restful and cooling, we concluded to return by a more direct route, through the bottom that none of us had traversed. Besides General Grant, there were half a dozen officers and eight or ten orderlies in the party, all of whom enjoyed the outing greatly. The General and I were leading as usual, when quite unexpectedly we came to a lagoon, the outer end of which had but little water in it, but its bed was filled with black, slimy ooze, which looked impassable. As I was supposed to be the guide, it was up to me to get them through. It was growing late and as it was ten or twelve miles by the way we had come, and not more than three by the compass to headquarters, it was important that we should get across and not turn back. Spurring forward and looking over the ground, I discovered an extensive drift pile near by containing a good many fence rails and other light stuff, whereupon I dismounted the orderlies and, assisted by such officers as were disposed to help, we constructed a corduroy road forty or fifty feet long, and in less than half an hour were safely over and on our way to camp. Dana and Rawlins as usual gave willing assistance, while Grant, seeing at a glance that the plan would suc-

ceed, expressed his approval and watched its progress with cheerful satisfaction.

The incident was a trivial one, but it made a deep impression on the others, and taught the nonprofessional members of the staff a lesson which they never forgot.

During the whole of the campaign and siege I kept a journal showing daily and hourly what we learned of the features of the country, its roads, streams, bridges, fords; the movement of our own troops and those of the enemy as they developed; what we gathered from prisoners, deserters, travelers, contrabands, and natives; where the General and his staff went, when they started, what they did, and when they got into camp. In it I also recorded the resources of the country, the distance from place to place, the condition of the roads, the rumored movements and the strength of the enemy, the information collected from local newspapers and captured mails, and in general such circumstances and facts, great and small, as might be useful or even interesting to the commanding general. This journal was closely written in pencil and always by myself, except when I was absent from headquarters, when Dana kept it for me.[1]

It gives many inside views of what was going on among the people, and, also, of what the Confederate soldiers had to say about their hardships, their marches, and even their officers. One young man at Edward's Depot wrote disparagingly about his brigade commander: "There's Old Featherstone! He has no humanity about him; his head is as flat on

[1] *Journal Military Service Institution*, No. CLIV, pp. 93-109, and No. CLV, pp. 261-275.

top as an African Negro's, and he's as mean as the devil wants him to be."

But among more important matters it contains the two dispatches from McClernand to Grant which figured in the controversy between those officers, but unfortunately another, which preceded them, was sent to Quimby with an endorsement directing him to take his division to McClernand's assistance. To save time Quimby endorsed an order on it and sent it to Colonel Boomer, directing him to lead off with his brigade. Shortly after arriving at the scene of action, Boomer was killed and the dispatch disappeared forever.

The entry connected with the later dispatches is in Dana's hand. It was made May 22, at 6 P. M., and runs as follows:

At about two o'clock this afternoon General Grant received the following dispatch from General McClernand:

Headquarters, Thirteenth Army Corps,
In the field near Vicksburg, Miss.,
May 22, 1863.

GENERAL:

We have gained the enemy's entrenchments at several points, but are brought to a stand.

I have sent word to McArthur to re-enforce me if he can.

Would it not be best to concentrate the whole or a part of his command on this point?

JOHN A. MCCLERNAND,
Maj. Gen. commanding.

MAJ. GEN. U. S. GRANT.

P. S.—I have received your dispatch. *My troops are all engaged and I cannot withdraw any to re-enforce others.* McC.

The following was received at four o'clock:

Headquarters, Thirteenth Army Corps,
May 23, 3.15 P. M.

GENERAL:

I have received your dispatch in regard to General Quimby's division and General McArthur's division. *As soon as they arrive I will press the enemy with all possible speed and doubt not that I will force my way through. I have lost no ground. My men are in two of the enemy's forts, but they are commanded by rifle pits in the rear.* Several prisoners have been taken, who intimate that the rear is strong. At this moment I am hard pressed.

JOHN A. MCCLERNAND,
Maj. Gen. commanding.

MAJ. GEN. U. S. GRANT,
Department of Tennessee.

In consequence of the last dispatch the assault was renewed in Sherman's and McPherson's front without success and with the loss of about one thousand men killed and wounded.

These dispatches, and especially the parts which I have put in italics, together with McClernand's threatened disobedience of orders, his profane language described elsewhere, and the order issued designating his corps as "the Army of the Mississippi" and unduly magnifying its deeds, while minimizing those of Sherman and McPherson, were what finally exhausted Grant's patience and caused him to relieve McClernand and send him to his home in Illinois.

It is but repeating what has been stated several times before to say that after this action was taken perfect subordination and good feeling prevailed

throughout that army. Reënforcements poured in from the North and by the end of June raised our effective strength to about eighty-five thousand men, mostly infantry and field artillery. With the steady progress of the siege operations, the gradual severing of communication between the besieged and the Confederacy, and the exhaustion of the garrison's munitions and supplies, it daily became more and more certain that Johnston could not raise the siege, and that Pemberton would soon be forced by starvation, if not by a successful assault, to surrender at discretion. My journal shows most of the facts which led to this conclusion, as well as those that enabled us to predict within a few days just when the surrender must take place.

From the habit which grew up between the opposing sentries and videttes, as soon as the heads of sap were at the enemy's ditches, the actual condition of the enemy became known with increasing certainty. On Lawler's front it was a common thing, toward the last days of the siege, to exchange an occasional drink of whiskey for a Vicksburg newspaper.

The scarcity of percussion caps and artillery ammunition was admitted soon after the investment, and the silence of the enemy, except under extreme provocation, confirmed the admission. It soon became known, also, that the garrison of the besieged town was on short rations, and with the certainty that the investment on both sides of the river was complete, and that all communication with the surrounding country was effectively cut off, it required no prophet to discern that the end was near at hand. Indeed, by the middle of June we were cer-

tain that the defense could not be prolonged beyond the middle of July.

While for reasons of economy the enemy wasted no ammunition on us, it was altogether different with our men, many of whom were expert riflemen. Every commanding point in our lines was occupied by sharp-shooters and, in addition, several wooden turrets were built at points which gave a plunging and enfilading fire by which many of the enemy were picked off. One of the notable features of the siege was the voluntary practice of the good marksmen, many of whom selected advantageous positions behind stumps and head logs, either to the front or in the main line of works, and, after covering themselves effectively from observation and crossfire, made it their daily practice to watch the enemy and, whenever a head or even a hand showed itself above the defenses, to fire at it singly or in groups, and it is to this practice, which seemed to have a strange fascination for men of a sporting turn of mind, that was due the unusually large number of the enemy who were found in the hospitals after the surrender, suffering from wounds in the head, arms, and hands. The curious thing about it was that no one seemed to feel any more compunction in taking a good shot at an unknown enemy than at a deer, and yet, when they got to know each other at the advanced posts, there was a punctilious observance by both sides of the informal truce which was early established. In other words, the mounted, passing, or concealed enemy was always in danger, while those within talking distance or acquaintance were never molested without due warning. In recognition of these natural conventions I never exposed

myself unnecessarily during daylight, but after nightfall I took advantage of all the open roads and short cuts, with the feeling that I was running but little risk. And yet the rebels, like our own people, had no compunction at firing on the passing but unseen enemy, especially when he could be plainly heard. In this way I had several close calls. Once a shot just missed me and my brother, riding with me, and severely wounded my orderly behind us.

With the knowledge of the exact state of affairs spreading throughout the army, a spirit of friendly banter grew up between the opposing forces which would have been impossible had they belonged to different races and spoken different languages. A common question from the inside was: "Yank, why don't you all make a general assault and end this thing?" Or, "When are you all going to attack again and close up this siege?" A common answer was: "Oh, don't be impatient, Johnny, we are in no hurry. We are just guarding prisoners and it would be inhuman to fire on them unless they undertake to break out." This was frequently varied by the promise of "fireworks on the 4th of July," from which the impression got abroad among both men and officers that we might do something desperate on that day, and that it would save a "further effusion of blood" if they should forestall us by surrendering. We knew pretty well on our side that the other side had enough food still on hand to last several days, and we were therefore taken somewhat by surprise late in the afternoon of July 3 by the display of a white flag on the enemy's works and the appearance of Major General Bowen under a flag of truce, bearing a letter to General Grant. Of

course, everybody was on the *qui vive* to learn what it meant, and it was not long before it became known that Pemberton had asked for an armistice and the appointment of three commissioners on each side to arrange terms of capitulation. The usual desire was expressed: "To save the further effusion of blood, which must otherwise be shed to a frightful extent," and this was backed up by the boastful claim that the garrison could "maintain its position for an indefinite period."

Of course, Grant saw that the essence of this thinly veiled proposition was an immediate surrender, and with pardonable pride replied that "the useless effusion of blood" could be ended at any time . . . "by an unconditional surrender of the city and garrison." He followed this by saying: "Men who have shown so much endurance and courage as those now in Vicksburg will always challenge the respect of an adversary, and I can assure you will be treated with all the respect due to prisoners of war."

Having written this he concluded his note with the declaration that he did not favor the appointment of commissioners because he had no other terms to offer than those already indicated.

To my great satisfaction, this reply was handed to me for delivery to the Confederate flag, and I was directed to wait for such reply as might be sent. This took me till a late hour that night, but I was well repaid for the vigil by the surrender which followed the next morning.

Pemberton's reply, brought by Colonel Locket, who had been a cadet with me at West Point, was followed by the surrender of the place on the 4th of July, on Grant's terms, which were unnecessarily

lenient. Instead of holding the captured army at Vicksburg or sending it north and scattering and disintegrating it, Grant required only that it should march out, lay down its flags and stack arms, and then return to camp, where he fed it till it had made out a full set of muster rolls and its officers and men had given their individual parole not to serve against the United States till duly exchanged.

These preliminaries required several days, and when completed the whole army, with the exception of seven or eight hundred men, who were tired of the rebellion and declined to serve any longer, marched back into the Confederacy with all their organizations, by division, brigade, regiment and company complete. Practically all they gave up were their flags and arms, and as soon as these could be replaced they were again in the Confederate ranks fighting to overthrow the Union. The probability of such a sequel was apparent to all at our headquarters as well as to Halleck in Washington, who finally foresaw the danger and directed Grant, July 8, to retain them as prisoners of war "till further orders."[1] The matter was discussed with the General, but, claiming that he did not have sufficient transports to carry them to Cairo, he let them march out, practically as Pemberton had originally proposed. It is now certain that his sullen opponent, by good management or good fortune, outwitted Grant in this arrangement. But little was said of it by the Administration or the press at large, but subsequent events at Chickamauga and Chattanooga showed plainly that it was a serious mistake which

[1] Badeau's "Military History of Ulysses S. Grant," Vol. 1, p. 663.

cost the country a great many lives, and for which the leniency of the victorious general was mainly responsible.

The generous terms of the capitulation were but poorly requited by the Confederate leaders. Shortly after they were arranged, Grant and his staff entered the captured works and rode to Pemberton's headquarters, where they were received with the coldest formality. No one even offered Grant a seat, and when he asked for a glass of water a member of the Confederate staff merely told him where he could find it. The situation was a trying one, but Pemberton and his officers met it badly. Their behavior was unhandsome and disagreeable in the extreme, while that of Grant and his staff was both modest and magnanimous to an extent to which the enemy had no just claim. Three young West Pointers, Saunders, Locket, and Landis, were polite and courteous, in recognition of which their haversacks and canteens were well filled with provisions and whiskey when they bade us good-by.

Without showing a trace of ill feeling or in any way recognizing the slight put upon him, the modest hero of Vicksburg terminated the interview as soon as possible and then established his headquarters at the commodious house of a planter's wife overlooking the river. It had been reported that she had made a Union flag and threatened to hoist it, but we saw nothing of it, although we remained there for over a month and became quite intimate with the family.

The next day, July 5, I rode the entire line of rebel entrenchments and made a critical examination of them. I found them to consist mainly of rifle

trench, not particularly strong or well laid out, but difficult of approach by troops in anything like good order. The line followed generally the top of the ridge, with here and there a redan or a stronger emplacement for field or siege guns, and occasionally a loop or second line sweeping the gorge of a work in front. The ground outside, generally broken and rough, was further obstructed by fallen timber and entanglements in such manner as to render an assault even by the roads and wider boyaus extremely costly and difficult. It was evident that nothing but the most methodical and painstaking preparation could insure a successful assault, and that the defence could have stood us off indefinitely had the garrison been properly supplied with provisions and ammunition.

From the abundant experience of this siege and defense it may be confidently asserted that no well-constructed, well-defended line of earthworks or rifle trench can be successfully assaulted by troops carrying the same arms as the defenders, unless they have a great preponderance of numbers and have made every possible preparation, not only for the attack, but for instantly following up every preliminary success. Even with a great preponderance of force, the assailants should work with all their might for a surprise or for some other advantage which would neutralize the entrenchments to be attacked. In those days the books on field fortifications dwelt upon the advantage of Rogniat's line or other entrenchments more or less regularly laid out with bastions, flanking arrangements, curtains, and openings, but I know of no instance during the entire war where anything so methodical was resorted

to in an active campaign. In every case that came under my observation, except at Selma, the practice was similar to that at Vicksburg, a simple line of rifle trench conforming to the ground, partly dug out and partly thrown up, with here and there a heavier section for artillery. At Selma, situated as it was on a level plain and covered by a regular bastioned line of strong profile, behind a stockade and mounting thirty-two guns, all constructed for permanent defense, we succeeded partly by surprise and partly because our troops were armed with Spencer magazine carbines and rifles, while the enemy had nothing but old-fashioned muzzle loaders. But even this case strengthens the conclusion that for the emergencies of a campaign, with long-range rapid-fire small arms, the simple line of rifle trench is all-sufficient and can be easily held against a superior number of similar troops in the open field. The only chance of victory over such lines, all other things being equal, must be looked for in stratagem or in a turning movement. Yet Grant, in the campaign against Richmond and Petersburg, and Sherman in that against Atlanta, in spite of all their previous experience, frequently resorted to the direct assault of temporary entrenchments, and in nearly every instance failed to gain any adequate advantage. Vicksburg taught this lesson, while the great campaigns just mentioned wrote it permanently into the modern art of war.

But the Port Royal expedition and the Antietam campaign, where I was a subordinate, gave me unusual opportunity for observation. Having been constantly on the move in both I picked up much information in reference to the crudities of our mili-

tary system. These were both confirmed and enlarged in the campaign and siege of Vicksburg, where I held a much more important position. To any educated military man it was evident on all hands that the Western volunteers, no matter what state they came from, were intelligent, vigorous, patriotic, and naturally amenable to discipline and were good soldiers in every respect except in instruction. This, coming from officers essentially of the same class, was necessarily crude and imperfect, but even the officers were in many respects excellent. They were generally capable of learning their duties and willing to perform them, but the system under which they labored in many instances paralyzed their efforts. Those who worked hardest and fought best lost the most men. Their regiments and companies were soonest run down and reduced to a state of inefficiency, and here is where the mischief first showed itself. Instead of keeping the road to the front crowded with recruits for the decimated companies and battalions, the state authorities, when they did anything at all, organized new regiments, mostly with new officers, and sent them fresh and green to the field, where they had to learn not only their tactics, but how to march, camp, cook, and care for themselves. Obviously all this would have come much easier, more quickly, and at far less expense of time and money had the men been enlisted or selected by conscription and sent direct to the regiments from their own region.

It had always been a favorite idea with military writers that while our regular army should be kept in time of peace, few in numbers, but highly trained and finely equipped for such emergencies as might

arise on the Indian frontier or elsewhere, it should be expanded in times of war in such manner as would make it fit to cope with any enemy that might assail us. In practice this was never done. A few regiments were added from time to time, but they were always made up of raw recruits drawn from the ranks of the people just as the volunteers were. In time they, of course, became regulars, and belonging to a national army and a fixed system, they became good soldiers, but even this method of expansion was unpopular with Congress and never gave sufficient reënforcement to produce any influence whatever on the course of the war. On the whole, it was wasted effort and expense. I had frequently heard Grant, whose army was made up almost entirely of volunteers, and who needed regular officers more than anything else, say that, so far as the Western armies were concerned, it would have been a great deal better if the regular army, except the staff and the staff corps, had been disbanded at the outbreak of the rebellion and the officers sent home to their respective states for the purpose of entering and helping organize the volunteer army.

I held this view from the first and did all I could to get a volunteer regiment, but, as this narrative shows, I failed, and finally gave up the effort entirely. But I never changed my opinion on this important subject. On the contrary, the more I studied it and the wider my experience became, the more firmly did I become convinced that our system should be reformed and our army nationalized, and to this end I made it a practice to confer with our generals, all of whom it will be remembered were appointed by the President and commissioned "by and

with the advice and consent of the Senate." They were classed as "United States Volunteers," and by that name and fact immediately took on greater stature and authority, and, I may add, I never met one who had come to be recognized as a good officer that did not favor the nationalization of the Volunteer Army.

So greatly was I impressed by that proposition that I made it the subject of correspondence with all the congressmen and leading men I knew. One of my letters finally found its way, without my knowledge or procurement, into the editorial page of the *New York Times* for April 12, 1863. It was introduced under the caption: "Necessity of a Reorganization of our Armies—Points to be Reached." The editorial remarks run as follows:

In view of the probable and speedy enforcement of the Conscription act, and the consequent necessity for the reorganization of our armies, we offer for the earnest consideration of the country some views written during this war by an officer of talent, rank and experience in the regular army. He has served on the staffs of Generals Sherman and Hunter at Port Royal, McClellan at Antietam, and, recently, Grant in Mississippi. His plans have been submitted to General Grant, General McClernand, General McPherson and General Logan, as well as to many others of the Western army, and received the warm approval of all those officers. Indeed, no man can have been long in the service and not acknowledge the absolute necessity of a reorganization of our armies. This it is which the rebels possess and we lack; this it is which too often turns the scales when they are equally balanced; this it is which is likely eventually to decide the great contest in which we are engaged.

Some of the views expressed below have already been

adopted, but we allow them to remain, as the fact of their acceptance by the Government will assist in giving weight to the judgment of the Writer.

What follows is quoted verbatim from my letter, under the head of

ARMY REORGANIZATION

Organization is a subject of which our army knows little, and the people and Congress nothing, but upon which, more than anything else, depends the efficiency of all armed forces. A just distribution of labor is a military as well as a civil necessity. This is secured only by a proper organization.

First, then, our grades of general officers are by no means complete. We should have lieutenant generals and generals, in addition to the present.

Second: The adjutant general's department should be reorganized and have its duties defined. The best model is that of the French Etat Major. Its officers should be selected with more care, given more rank, and be held more strictly accountable for the prompt performance of their duty. As an evidence of the inefficiency of our present system, see the absolute want of knowledge concerning the strength of the National armed forces to-day (August 10, 1862). Mr. Senator Wilson probably obtained from General Thomas his data for the statement that we had too many men in the field by 150,000! There is probably not an army in the field whose strength is properly accounted for. There is probably not a general who does not waste half his time in attending to details which should be disposed of by a "well-regulated staff."

Third: The Inspector General's Department is simply a nonentity—totally inefficient and devoid of power to correct evils, where by chance it may find them. Every brigade, division and corps ought to have its inspector selected with a special reference to his soldierly qualities

and general knowledge of organizations and the different arms; and in our armies there should be special inspectors of cavalry and artillery—all empowered, as officers of the staff, to correct all disarrangements, as a well-digested system of regulations should prescribe. There is no department of the military service by which a more salutary influence could be produced than by the inspector general's, thoroughly reorganized and set to work.

Fourth: The Quartermaster's Department is sadly in need of internal regulation. Meigs is a very able man, but lacks practical experience.

Fifth: The Commissary Department approaches nearer to efficiency than any I know.

Sixth: The strength of the Engineer Department is simply frittered away by the double organization, and the dead-heads upon both. With more talent than any other corps in the service, it has less influence. Neither branch of it is used as it should be; not one-half the work of which they are capable is exacted, and, finally, they are not strong enough by half in officers, nor a tenth part in engineer soldiers.

Seventh: The Ordnance is a little better off, but is also paralyzed. It should have more vigor, more officers, more men, and more facilities for manufacturing munitions of war.

Eighth: A well-regulated Staff is the soul of military organization. With these improvements, the line would at once be elevated greatly, both in spirit and efficiency, but by a judicious system of examinations and reward for meritorious conduct in officers and privates, many worthless men would be turned out of service and many useful ones inspired with new vigor and ardor.

Ninth: During the English revolution in the time of the Charles', for the first two years, Parliament scattered money with a lavish hand—everything was bought in the army—patriotism, valor, public spirit—all had their price. As a consequence, the Cavaliers, under Prince Rupert, and

the dashing courtiers conquered in every battle. It was not till Cromwell and Hampden arose, with their organized regiments, that the principles of the revolution began to make head against the fiery valor of the Cavaliers. The army was reorganized. The "Ironsides" and the New Model Army became renowned in the world's history for manly and invincible courage; they always conquered. The analogy between then and now, in principles and facts, is too striking for me to trace it further. Must we not profit by history? Is not the lesson plain? Organize and concentrate. Organize by building upon the old basis, rather than attempting to lay the foundations anew. Fill up the old regiments; weed out inefficient officers, fill the vacancies by meritorious officers and non-commissioned officers—adopt a system. Let the anomaly of two distinct armies be destroyed; let us return to the traditions of the Government with reference to our standing army. Let it be expanded by merging the entire volunteer army with it. Give each regiment a portion of the National Army in name as well as in fact. Regulate the promotions so as to get a homogeneous, united, spirited army. As for the details of what I propose I will not go into them, but simply say that a far better arrangement than that of adding a simple new regiment to the volunteer army would be to expand as many as necessary to two or three battalions. In this way the new levy of 300,000 men of July last could be thoroughly incorporated with the present forces in a few weeks.

Tenth: With a remark in reference to a system of reserves, I will close. Should the army be reorganized as I suggest, the drafts would then be made for the general service and could be kept at general depots for instruction, till needed to fill up the vacancies; thus vacancies could be filled promptly in those regiments which required it most. Under the present system some of the regiments which have been kept out of harm's way are overflowing with men, because recruiting happens to be brisk in the

states from which they come; while other regiments which have been decimated by disease and battle are rendered almost useless because recruiting happens to be slow in their states, or because new regiments are organized rather than old ones filled up.

The prominent ideas of this plan are: First, a well-regulated Staff; second, a well-organized homogeneous army, to be formed by a union of the volunteer and regular armies, on a proper and equitable basis, and, third, a proper and efficient system of reserves and recruiting—all so combined as to stimulate merit, zeal, courage, and a national spirit of devotion and constancy.

It is only by some such system that we can possibly continue the war to a successful issue. It is absolutely necessary, in point of economy as well as of military efficiency.

The war has been conducted too far already upon the principle of main-strength and awkwardness. New life, new vigor and unity must be infused into it. These can only be secured by organization and discipline. We have the old question among military men to decide, which is most to be depended upon—enthusiasm or discipline? Without undertaking to say which of these virtues is best, I will simply remark: the rebels are certainly superior to us in the former, equal to us in the latter, and far ahead of us in unity of action and purpose. To conquer them, then, it is clear we must have something beside simple superiority of numbers and material; and have them, too, elsewhere than at home, or in the depots, arsenals and storehouses. The military and true principle is that numbers, discipline and material avail nothing except when arrayed upon the vital point at the vital moment.

These truths will be recognized yet, before this war is terminated. The rebels understand them now.

It may be here observed that while the Union cause signally triumphed in the end without a reor-

ganization of the Union army on a national basis or a prompt and effective enforcement of the conscription, it is none the less true that some such reorganization as that recommended by me would have promptly put it on a far more effective and economical basis than it ever reached. This, as well as the extravagant wastefulness of our system is conclusively shown by General Upton in his admirable work on "The Military Policy of the United States," published at the Government Printing Office, Washington, 1904.

IX

SHERMAN'S CAMPAIGN TO CENTRAL ALABAMA

Headquarters in Vicksburg—Rawlins and Grant—Grant visits New Orleans—Season of rest—Inspection tour —Army wastes summer—Grant and staff ordered to Chattanooga—Military Division of the Mississippi.

Immediately after the surrender of Vicksburg, Sherman, reinforced by McPherson, was sent to drive Johnston out of Mississippi, but the weather was extremely hot, the roads dusty, water scarce, and foraging poor. Consequently his columns, after reoccupying Jackson, went but a few miles beyond that place and there gave up the pursuit. Instead of following Johnston and pushing into central Alabama, as had been expected, he halted on the excuse that no water could be found in eastern Mississippi, and without even arranging to hold Jackson as an advanced post and rallying place for the Union sentiment of the state he left everything to the enemy and within three weeks was again in his old camp on the Big Black.

I had predicted this conclusion of the campaign to Rawlins and Grant. I contended that Sherman ought to be able to go where Johnston went. I urged that the time and conditions were favorable

to the continuance of a vigorous campaign along the line of railroad running from Vicksburg eastward through central Alabama, which would not only give us Selma, the main Confederate arsenal and military depot, and Montgomery, the first Confederate capital, but cause the evacuation of Mobile on one hand and northern Georgia on the other.

It seemed clear that the failure to make such a campaign as was now open to us would be short-sighted and weak on our part and just what the enemy desired, because it would neutralize our army, put it on the defensive, and give the enemy time to collect and reorganize his scattered forces and to send reënforcements to Bragg against Rosecrans. And this is precisely what took place. I argued the case with Rawlins and Grant as long as it was open, but they stood by Sherman to the end. Even when he brought forward the additional claim that his men were tired, they accepted it as valid, although I pointed out the indisputable fact that most of the troops with him had been in camp from the last of May till the 4th of July, and that the rest had been engaged in the siege, which was by no means so fatiguing as an active campaign.

The simple fact is that Sherman, as if depressed by his disastrous failure at Chickasaw Bayou, was at that time a timid leader, who could not be depended upon to push home his advantages. And he was still under the cloud of the cruel and unjust newspaper criticism received during his command in Kentucky. My opinion was confirmed by the failure of his movement against Bragg's right at the battle of Missionary Ridge and still further by his belated and abortive second campaign in January and Feb-

ruary, 1864, from Vicksburg through Jackson toward central Alabama.

Frankness requires me to add that both Rawlins and Grant were displeased at the freedom with which I criticized Sherman in the instances just mentioned, but Rawlins, when the events were all ended, freely admitted that my criticisms had been fully vindicated.

But to return to Grant's army, the paralysis and disintegration of which began shortly after the capture of Vicksburg, when the Thirteenth Corps, about fifteen thousand strong, was sent to Banks in Louisiana. A division was sent about the same time to Steele in Arkansas, and Parke, with the Ninth Corps, was returned to Burnside in east Tennessee, while McPherson, with the Seventeenth Corps, was left at Vicksburg with detachments at Grand Gulf and Natchez, to make good the national control of the Mississippi from Cairo to the Gulf. This was mainly due to orders from Washington, where the principles of "Pepper Box Strategy," as professed by Halleck, too long held sway.

While we were still at Vicksburg, an incident took place which gave rise to some comment and a good deal of annoyance to General Grant. He was fond of McPherson, who, like himself, was somewhat easily imposed upon by designing men. Shortly after promotion to the rank of major general, the latter had taken a man without a commission on his staff, and had allowed him to wear a colonel's uniform and shoulder straps and to make himself generally officious about headquarters, especially in connection with railroad matters. He was the brother of a Chicago banker and made pre-

tentions to riches and influence on his own account. He was presented to me in northern Mississippi, but his sycophancy at once aroused my suspicions, which I communicated in due time to Rawlins, who promptly adopted them as his own. This person claimed to be a colonel in the Mexican Liberal Army and seemed to have plenty of money, but finally became widely known as a common rascal and swindler, who, after defrauding the governor of New Jersey and many others in all parts of the country, was convicted and sent to the penitentiary in Arkansas for a term of years. He died before the expiration of his sentence, but not till he had made a full confession, which was published by the press throughout the country.

Shortly after the fall of Vicksburg he presented a beautiful thoroughbred charger to McPherson and a major general's dress sword and belt said to have cost $1,100 to General Grant. Rawlins and I both advised the General not to accept it, but, fearing to hurt McPherson's feelings, he received the sword, but sent it home at once. As inspector general I soon discovered that this man had no right to wear a colonel's coat and shoulder straps and reported him to both Grant and McPherson. The former accepted my report, and, after it was confirmed and extended by friends at Chicago, wrote McPherson that he should get rid of the bogus colonel as soon and as quietly as possible, but McPherson resented our interference between him and his friend, and, as he was killed in battle the next year in front of Atlanta, never fully realized how completely he had been imposed upon.

The unfortunate and disastrous results which

followed the adoption of the policy of dispersion after the capture of Vicksburg are now a matter of history. They might not have been so costly had there been no other armies in the Western theater of operations, but when it is recalled that Rosecrans had crossed the Tennessee and was, as he evidently believed, in full pursuit of a retreating army, which, when reënforced by the army paroled at Vicksburg, as well as by Longstreet's corps from Virginia, was late in September to gain a great victory, it will be seen that a much better disposition of Grant's forces would have been to send them to Chattanooga before, rather than after, the battle of Chickamauga.

I presented this view as soon as Sherman signified his intention of giving up the campaign east of Jackson, but under the plea that all first-class military operations were dictated from Washington my remonstrance produced no effect. I also opposed the detachment of the Thirteenth Corps to Banks, where it was scattered along the coast all the way from New Orleans to the mouth of the Rio Grande, adding that our true policy in reference to that part of the Confederacy which had been cut off west of the Mississippi was to leave it, like the dissevered tail of a snake, to die of itself, while we should send Sherman, with all the troops that could be spared from the imperative duty of keeping the Mississippi open, by steamboat to Memphis and thence by rail and country road to form a junction with Rosecrans wherever he might be found.

Shortly after the surrender, General Banks, accompanied by General Stone and one or two other staff officers, paid us a visit at Vicksburg and I

had the pleasure of showing them about the defenses and through our parallels and approaches. They seemed to be greatly interested in my explanation of the operations, and asked a multitude of questions. Stone, who afterward served in the Khedive's army, was particularly inquisitive and, being a West Point man, caught on rapidly to the particulars of the campaign and the siege. They remained two days with us and in taking their leave warmly pressed Grant to return their visit at New Orleans and to bring Lieutenant Colonel Wilson with him. This he kindly promised to do, and naturally I felt flattered by the warmth of their invitation, and still more by the general's ready promise of compliance, but I could not think of leaving my work at a time so particularly favorable to putting it on a satisfactory basis. It was the first real leisure that the Army of the Tennessee had ever had—the first period in its history favorable to the perfection of its discipline and administration, and I considered it my duty to give the work unremitting personal attention. Besides, neither Rawlins nor I approved the return visit. We thought General Grant's place was also with his own army and that as Banks' operations, in whatever direction they might lie, must necessarily be of secondary importance, they would concern us but little. We distinctly disapproved the visit, and as it turned out it was not only a source of proper solicitude to Rawlins, but of very great personal disadvantage to Grant, without benefiting either army or the cause of the country in the slightest degree. It was simply time wasted for all concerned.

At the house chosen for headquarters in Vicksburg we found several young ladies, one of whom was a Northerner of very unusual beauty, living there as a governess. Naturally enough, General Grant was the first to make their acquaintance; my turn followed a few days later, when I had an occasion to look up the General, whom I found in the drawing-room, chatting with the Northern beauty. As the business in hand required him to leave the room, he presented me and suggested that I should remain till he returned. During his absence a beautiful bouquet was brought in and presented to the young lady, without card or explanation of any sort. Seeing her puzzled and embarrassed, I was about to take my leave when she explained that this was the second bouquet she had received in the same unconventional and irregular way, and as it was under the circumstances an unwelcome attention, she did not know how to treat the matter. Regarding her remarks as an appeal for aid, I said at once that she should explain her embarrassment to Mrs. Grant, who had just joined us and who would, through her husband, give ample protection. This, for obvious reasons, she did not like to do, consequently I undertook to ascertain who her unknown admirer was and to put him under Rawlins' surveillance. As it turned out my plan of procedure was easily and promptly successful. The swain was shortly discovered to be a married man, a handsome and very gallant additional aide-de-camp, with the rank of colonel on the General's staff. The case was fully explained to Rawlins, whose indignation was expressed in language no one could fail to understand. The necessary ad-

monitions were issued, the unwelcome advances were discontinued and a standard of behavior established about headquarters that left nothing to be desired.

Rawlins, who had been a widower for something over two years, was a man of austere manners and unusual shyness, entirely given up to his duties. He sought neither the acquaintance nor the society of the ladies, but lived absolutely apart and rather disapproved the contrary course for the General and his staff, but when the General left for New Orleans and I for Red River, Rawlins was presented to the ladies and became their guardian. The story is soon told. He fell deeply in love with the object of his solicitude and, like all good men, desired to appear worthy of her. As his most noted sins were an occasional outburst of violence and profanity, he made a solemn resolution to control his temper and give up swearing. He soon told her the simple story of his life, and in due time offered her the protection of his name and station. They were married at her home at Danbury, Connecticut, on the twenty-fourth of December following.

Shortly after the incident of the bouquet an interesting event of another sort took place at headquarters which well illustrates the relations between Grant and Rawlins. Although it was the policy of the Administration to encourage the purchase and shipment of cotton, one of the standing orders issued while headquarters were still in west Tennessee had forbidden the practice on account of its demoralizing tendencies to both men and officers. But, in spite of this well-known order, we had hardly got into Vicksburg when a kinsman of General Grant's bringing a permit from the Secretary of

the Treasury established himself nearby and began buying cotton. This soon became known and, without consultation, Rawlins at once issued an order expelling the cotton buyer from the department. This came to Grant's attention without delay, whereupon he mildly suggested that Rawlins should hold up the order as unnecessarily harsh, and as giving more publicity to the case than was required.

This was more than the rugged and determined chief-of-staff could stand, and, evidently fearing that it meant a relaxation of discipline, if not a defeat of justice, he burst forth, perhaps unconsciously, with a volley of oaths, followed by the declaration that if he were the commanding general of a department and any kinsman of his dared to come within its limits and violate one of its important standing orders he would arrest him, march him out, and hang him to the highest tree within five miles of camp!

Thereupon, without waiting to note the effect of his stentorian speech, he turned about and, reentering his own office, violently slammed the door behind him.

It was an embarrassing episode—the only one of the kind I had ever witnessed—and as the punctuation of his remarks was both profane and disrespectful, I followed him out and said:

"Rawlins, that won't do. You have used language in the General's presence that was both insubordinate and inexcusable, and you should not only withdraw it, but apologize for it."

Without a moment's hesitation, he replied: "You are right. I am already ashamed of myself for losing my temper. Come with me," and, walking back

into the General's presence, he said in his deep, sonorous voice:

"General, I have just used rough and violent language in your presence which I should not have used and I not only want to withdraw it, but to humbly beg your pardon for it."

Then with a pause and a blush he added:

"The fact is, General, when I made the acquaintance of the ladies at our headquarters I resolved to give up the use of profane language and blankety-blank my soul if I didn't think I had done it!"

At this naïve confession Grant's face lightened with a smile as he replied:

"That's all right, Rawlins! I understand; you were not cursing, but, like Wilson's friend, simply expressing your intense vehemence on the subject matter."

It is needless to add that the incident passed off to the satisfaction of all concerned. The order was suspended, but discipline was vindicated by a quiet intimation on the part of the General that the intruder's health would be improved by an early return to the North, and he went the next day!

Grant had, however, been somewhat fatigued by the campaign and, feeling that he needed a vacation, shortly after Sherman returned to the Big Black, took steamer with several ornamental members of his staff for the return visit to Banks at New Orleans, while Rawlins remained at headquarters, considerably troubled in his own mind, preparing the detailed report of the late operations. As soon as this was finished he took it to Washington in person, where he was received by the President and cabinet with marked civility. While it is

known that he gave them a personal account of the campaign and of the situation at Vicksburg and throughout the state of Mississippi, he unfortunately left no record of what he said upon that interesting occasion, but it is well known that he produced a favorable impression on the President and the members of his cabinet.[1] He got back to the army about the middle of August and remained there, practically in command over both Sherman and McPherson till his chief returned.

It was during this unfortunate visit to Banks that Grant, while galloping rapidly to a review at Carrollton, had a fall with his horse which severely injured his leg and made it both painful and difficult for him to get about for several months. Indeed, Grant's hurt was so severe that he suffered considerably from it till after the Chattanooga campaign, and had more or less trouble from it to the end of his life. His injury doubtless had its influence at the time in inclining him to the policy of inaction for the heated term at least, and as it was an unusually dry season, there was but little said either in Washington or elsewhere in regard to wasted opportunities.

All these circumstances combined to make it to a certain extent a season of rest, or of senseless and misdirected marching up and down in the land for all except myself. Up to that time, although titular inspector general, my duties had necessarily been those of an engineer and general staff officer. Enjoying robust health as I did throughout the campaign, I had all the work I could attend to, while the troops were actually engaged in marching and

[1] "Diary of Gideon Welles."

fighting, as well as constructing parallels and approaches, with but little time for special inspections or for putting my own department on a regular and systematic basis. As this became my first duty as soon as the siege was fairly over, I drew up and with Grant's approval sent out to the corps and division inspectors a set of detailed instructions covering their duties in reference to every branch of the service, both active and administrative, and directed that they should begin at once a series of minute inspections, extending to every division, brigade, regiment, company, and detachment in the army. This done, I then arranged for a series of personal inspections to see that orders and regulations were everywhere duly enforced, and that the troops, as far as I could influence them, should be brought to the highest possible state of discipline, instruction, and efficiency. These instructions were all sent out by the end of the first week after we entered Vicksburg, but as they were altogether military and technical, they have long since passed into the limbo of uninteresting and forgotten things which call for no resurrection. While they played their part in making the Army of the Tennessee one of the best that ever upheld the national cause, so far as I am concerned they must be allowed to rest in the peaceful oblivion of the Records.

When Pemberton's army marched back into the Confederacy they left behind several hundred sick and wounded, which Grant agreed to deliver at Monroe, a river town in northeastern Louisiana. They were a poor, helpless set that had suffered as much from inattention as from sickness and wounds and would have fared much better in our

hospitals than in their own, but on July 21 about three hundred of them were placed aboard two steamboats and started to their destination under my charge. I had, besides, several families, increased at Grand Gulf by another, bound for the trans-Mississippi, and this full complement of passengers taxed my means of entertainment to the utmost. It was indeed a dreary and distressing trip. The doctors and the boats' crews did their best to make the suffering soldiers comfortable and to cheer them on their way, but several died and were buried, uncoffined, on the river bank, while most of the remainder had evidently got all they wanted of the war and went with suffering bodies and sinking hearts to this remote corner of the Confederacy.

Such of the women and children as were well gave us far more trouble than our sick and wounded. They were persistent in their demands as well as offensive in their loyalty to the South, and did their best to make the trip lively for us. But for the part taken by one MacMahon, purser of the steamer *Belle Creole,* on which I had taken passage, the trip would have been a particularly distressing one. He generously took the burden of entertainment off my shoulders, and, although an Irishman from Indiana, he cheerfully did his best, not only to satisfy the wants of our passengers, but to defend the government authorities from their attacks. They were, as might have been expected, bitterly opposed to the emancipation of the negroes, which had now become the settled policy of the government, and firm in the conviction that they would be utterly unable to profit by it, our guests denounced the meas-

ure as both ill-advised and wrong in every respect. They boldly declared that even MacMahon himself did not believe in it and would not try to defend it.

But in this they were mistaken. The fluent and enthusiastic Irishman burst forth with a torrent of eloquence and an aptitude of Biblical reference that put an end for the time to the controversy. The women of the South were firm believers in the Bible and its sanction of slavery, but MacMahon was equal to the occasion:

"Yes," he exclaimed, "I do approve of the proclamation, and I firmly believe the whole negro race will be better off for freedom. I accept your appeal to the Bible and refer you to the story of the Children of Israel, and how Moses led them out of the land of bondage. You all know that was one of the steps by which the Christian plan of salvation was given to the world, and by which all mankind are to be ultimately saved. But do any of you recall how many of the Children of Israel who crossed the Red Sea dry-shod and wandered in the Wilderness for forty years ever succeeded in getting even a sight of the Promised Land?"

Of course, none recalled, whereupon MacMahon triumphantly added:

"I knew you could not! Only one of all that mighty host! And I say—if in God's providence only one negro slave in all this land shall gather the full fruits of freedom, we should not despair, but leave God in his own good time to lead the whole negro race into the Promised Land!"

The scenery of the Mississippi, the Red, the Black and the Wachita Rivers, through which our

voyage lay for four hundred miles, was wild and primitive in the extreme. Here and there half a dozen houses, a woodpile, or a steamboat landing, called by some high-sounding name, and occasionally a cornfield were all we saw to break the continuity of the primeval forest, which seemed to stretch indefinitely into the interior. I saw but one white man on the Black River, and he was so old, decrepit, and ignorant that he hardly knew there was war in the land. All the able-bodied men were absent in the army.

At Harrisonburg we came to the first landing not subject to overflow. It was guarded by Fort Beauregard, an earthwork mounting several guns, one of which brought us to with a round shot fired across our bows. A parley followed at once with Colonel Logan, the Confederate commandant, and, after receiving an explanation of my humane mission, he permitted me to continue my voyage to within three miles of Monroe. Why he decided to stop us short of the town I never knew, but the river was falling rapidly, and as it turned out the shoal water and sandbars forced us to stop twelve miles short of our destination. Finding it impossible to go on, I sent a Confederate messenger to ask what we should do with our poor, helpless sick and wounded. Nothing had yet been done for their comfort, but word soon came back that we should transfer as many as possible to a little country church nearby and leave the rest at the landing to be reëmbarked on several small steamboats which would be sent for them. Having discharged these unfortunate creatures, we turned about and made our way back to the Mississippi as rapidly as possible. We were forbidden

to land anywhere except at Harrisonburg to put out our pilot. The Confederate authorities seemed to be fearful that we would learn the exact armament of their little fort, but their caution was unnecessary, for I had already made out that it mounted three smooth bore thirty-two pounders, one twelve-pounder and one six-pounder rifle, all of which I felt confident would fall into our hands whenever we chose to go for them.

I left Vicksburg with General and Mrs. Grant on the steamer *Ben Franklin* August 18. The General was going to Cairo for the purpose of communicating with the Government by telegraph. We were accompanied by General Lorenzo Thomas and two of his sons, on their way to Washington, and the party, while far from hilarious, was a pleasant one. I had been trying ever since the fall of Vicksburg to begin a tour of inspection, which, I thought, would last five or six weeks. As I had not been at home since the outbreak of the war, with Grant's permission I went on by steamer to visit my mother before beginning my tour. I arrived in the early evening, and, having brought my horse with me, I mounted and rode home. I saw no one at the landing whom I had ever seen before. All the young men had gone to the war and the old ones were probably in bed, and so I arrived unheralded and ungreeted, but my mother recognized my voice as she heard me directing my orderly to take my horse to the stable. We had a joyous meeting and the next day I looked up my relations and friends and had a pleasant reunion with all. My two brothers, both of whom had been home on sick leave, had rejoined their commands, the major in Arkan-

sas and the captain in the Thirteenth Corps with Banks. Under the tender care of relatives and friends they had reveled in "the fleshpots of Egypt" and had returned to duty completely restored in health and strength.

As there was nothing the matter with me, I set about my inspection without delay, and in forty-eight hours I was again on the river packet *Charlie Bowen,* with my early friend, Gus Lemcke, the purser, with whom I passed a few pleasant hours. He knew everybody on the river, male and female, and told me who had gone to the war, who had married, and who had gone over to the majority. Although only a steamboat man, he had beautiful taste in literature and was fully in touch with the latest in history, romance, and poetry. It was a delightful trip down the Ohio, and as it covered exactly the same points as the one I took some years before in quest of the steamer *Liahtuna,* it produced a lasting impression on me.

As soon as my inspection of a few hours at Paducah was finished I went on to Cairo, where there was a strong garrison for the protection of the supplies at that place. It was under the command of an old West Pointer, Napoleon Bonapart Buford, a distinguished veteran of the old regular army type. It was his boast that he was a "hermeneutic philosopher," whose pleasure between times was to consider the problems of life, both present and future. I found his garrison in fair condition, but far too large for the work in hand. He was conscious of that fact and ambitious for a more active command, and at dinner that evening talked freely on all the questions of the day, among others about

army reorganization and army commanders. He shared the common belief that so far we had developed no great leader in the East and only one in the West, and there was much interest among military men at least in regard to the coming man. Up to that time we had had only one "Young Napoleon," one "Old Brains" and one "Fighting Joe," but the impression was slowly gaining ground that none of these quite filled the bill. Grant's name had come strongly to the front from the Vicksburg campaign, but there was still a lingering fear that something might go wrong even with him. All this the old veteran carefully recited, and when he had covered the whole ground he stated his conclusion with impressive deliberation:

"The fact is, Colonel, there are just three men in the United States fully capable of commanding the Army of the Potomac." And then pausing long enough for me to ask who they were, he added: "George B. McClellan is one, Henry W. Halleck is another," and, with his hand on his breast and a stately bow, he continued: "Modesty forbids me to mention the third!"

It was an unexpected conclusion, but I made no comment till I related the incident to General Grant just after he was called to Washington as lieutenant general. He enjoyed it greatly and, not only never forgot it, but frequently used the modest phrase when a more direct one might have savored of egotism.

From Cairo I went to Columbus, where I found General A. J. Smith, an old regular, commanding. One of his subordinates was the Hungarian patriot Asboth, a distinguished and courtly gentleman with

gray hair, a fierce moustache and a staff in which two of Kossuth's nephews were serving. He had a fine string of horses and a pack of greyhounds, but they were sadly out of place, and it might be truthfully said that his camp, like that of Marshal Soubise, was nearly all "kitchen, cellar, and toilet table." I found also at Island No. 10 and Fort Pillow far too many troops, artillery, infantry, cavalry, and negroes. The camps were generally clean and in fairly good sanitary condition, but so far as I could see without an enemy within two hundred miles.

The next permanent post was Memphis, where I found Major General Hurlbut with the headquarters of the Sixteenth Corps. He was a South Carolinian, educated in the North, and long resident in Illinois. He had a mixed command, mainly stationed at Fort Pickering, and after a full day spent in pointing out how it could be still further improved in drill, discipline, and administration, on September 16, at 9 P. M., I wrote to Rawlins' chief-of-staff. After certain explanations in regard to a proposed cavalry expedition,[1] I continued as follows:

My understanding of the case was that you wanted a cavalry commander quite as badly as the cavalry itself, and I have only to say on that head that I always thought Hatch Grierson's superior, and to-day I became thoroughly convinced that my judgment was properly founded. I inspected the Second Iowa this afternoon, and I say to you what I said to Hatch, that, though it is not all that cavalry should be, it is by far the best cavalry regiment in the department of the Tennessee; and, what is more, Hatch is the best officer and ought to be sent down. From what

[1] O. R. Series 1, Vol. XXX, p. 664.

Sargent said you probably take the same view of the case, and therefore wish Hatch's regiment to be sent. Hurlbut (who, between me and you, is small enough to be envious and jealous of General Grant) knows fully the worth of Hatch's regiment, and will retain it here unless you order it down.

I don't like this part of the machine. We have too many generals engaged in semi-civil affairs, to the utter neglect of their military duties. I have not yet seen one who was not commanding a "post," or "district," or a "city." I have reviewed and inspected nearly all of the Sixteenth Army Corps, and have not yet seen any troops on the parade ground commanded by a general. This may be a little surprising to you, but is nevertheless true. These distinguished gentlemen should be required to assume command of their men as their first duty and dispose of civil and trade business afterward. They should be held responsible for the discipline, order, and instruction of their troops, and give their first attention to those matters rather than devote their undivided time to cotton, confederates, and corruption. I tell you, sir, the Government of the United States cannot be upheld in purity and honesty by hands that lay aside the sword for instruments of trade and peace. We want soldiers, not traders; generals, not governors and civil agents. A few hundred thousand bayonets led by clear heads and military rules can crush the rebellion, but a million without military generals can do nothing except by main strength and awkwardness. The system of occupying undisputed territory is all wrong. We must put our armies in the field and compel our generals to lead them against the enemy, and, if they fail from ignorance, put them aside. I am disgusted with the whole system.

The next day I inspected posts in West Tennessee along the Ohio and Mobile Railroad and the Memphis and Charleston Railroad as far east as

Corinth, and found them occupied by permanent detachments, amounting in the aggregate to many thousand men. As there were no rebel forces within reach, the trip confirmed me in the impression that we were frittering away almost an entire army corps in the useless occupation of territory already fully within our control. I therefore wrote again to Rawlins, urging the abandonment of these outlying posts, and the concentration of the troops at central points from which they could be rapidly sent to strengthen the moving army in the field. I pointed out that we could never put down the rebellion by conducting an old-fashioned war of occupation or positions—that our forces must keep constantly after the rebel armies and that all communities within our lines should be compelled to protect themselves against their own guerrillas. I urged that by adopting this policy and rigidly adhering to it the Army of the Tennessee would soon be able to put that part of the Confederacy against which it was directed completely on the defensive and to give the larger hostile forces so much employment that they would have but little time and no opportunity for detachments, raids, or counter movements against our communications.

I spent two weeks in the District of West Tennessee, traveling and working night and day, sleeping where and when I could, and eating what I could get. On my first visit to Memphis I sought the service of a dentist and the work he did left my teeth in a sensitive and painful condition, which, for the first time in my life, banished sleep for an entire night. But the next day at Pocahontas I was

completely relieved and tranquilized, strange as it may seem, by a dose of ipecachuana. Surgeon Cady said I was suffering from malaria, and while neither he nor any one else pretended to know what malaria was, his remedy was efficacious and gave me almost instantaneous relief. This was the nearest I came to being laid up during the entire war. From the first I had a natural prejudice against flies, mosquitoes, and insects generally, and made it a rule never to sleep on the ground without a mosquito bar when I could get one, never to drink surface water or to use either liquor or tobacco, and consequently I enjoyed almost perfect health no matter where I was.

I governed my conduct by the same rule in both the Spanish and Boxer wars, and can truthfully aver that I never lost a day from duty by sickness during my entire military and civil career. The scientific world now knows that nearly all fevers are due to inoculation from insect life. In my own case habitually guarding against that sort of annoyance and avoiding excesses of all kinds, I am now certain I took the very course that science would have prescribed had it known enough to prescribe at all.

On my last inspection at Memphis my horse, in turning a corner, slipped and fell heavily, catching my left foot between him and the pavement. I was up and remounted in a second, but my heel and toes had been so pressed together and the ligaments and muscles so strained that I was soon in great pain. On reaching headquarters the chief surgeon cut the boot from my foot, which soon became so sore and swollen that I could not walk on it for ten days. Fortunately, my work in that district was finished

and with the support of bandages and a pair of crutches I took steamer for Helena, where I was to have made my last inspection, but I was forced to leave this to my assistant attached to that command.

While at Memphis General Lorenzo Thomas, still engaged in organizing negro troops, came aboard and gave me a full account of General Grant's similar injury at New Orleans a short time before.

I arrived at Vicksburg on September 21 and found the General hardly yet able to go on crutches, but neither of us was in such pain as to make us indifferent to the state of affairs in the Department or at headquarters. We found Rawlins deeply in love with the beautiful governess, but doubtful of his fate. The lady was "uncertain, coy, and hard to please." They were acquaintances of but a few weeks and had been thrown together by circumstances over which neither had full control. It was, therefore, not strange that "the course of true love did not run smooth," or that it took all that their friends could do to guide them around the obstacles in the way. Fortunately, those were not insuperable, but the country had reached a great emergency in its history, which controlled the immediate movements of both Grant and his chief-of-staff.

While the General and the rest were deeply interested in a favorable outcome of the romance, there was far more important business both inside and outside of the Department requiring attention. In addition to the facts set forth in my written reports, I gave General Grant many details of the conditions at the various points in western Kentucky and Tennessee, and especially at Memphis,

where a large illicit contraband trade with the Confederates was going on through the lines. Cotton, then scarce at all manufacturing centers, was coming in in considerable quantities, while ammunition, clothing, liquors, medicines, and small supplies of every kind were going out. Many officers of rank and consideration, including the provost marshal, a member of Grant's department staff, were thought to be engaged in the illicit business, and, as it afterward appeared from a "Rebel War Clerk's Diary," the provost marshal was actually in the pay of the Confederates. The atmosphere was heavy with fraud and corruption. The hotels were crowded with Treasury agents, cotton traders, sharpers and runners of every kind and nationality. The restrictions on trade were so light and so easily avoided and there was so little actual campaigning under way that the whole military service in that part of the Department was demoralized. The situation called for drastic measures, and for a radical reorganization of the military administration, especially in that region, as I had already pointed out to Grant and his subordinate generals and local commanders.

But this was not the worst. Banks' operations on the Red River and Bayou Tèche were at a standstill, while affairs were fast reaching a crisis in northwestern Georgia. Rosecrans had driven Bragg across the Tennessee, and, still calling for reënforcements, was advancing with exultation and confidence to what he evidently thought certain victory. But Longstreet, with a veteran army corps from Lee's Army of North Virginia, all unknown, was making his way by rail to the scene of what was to be one of the deadliest conflicts of the Civil War.

While Grant's victorious army, mainly at Vicksburg, midway between Rosecrans and Banks and five hundred miles as the crow flies from either, was still resting supinely in its camps, with the General himself confined to his bed or his crutches by an injured leg, he was not altogether responsible for the situation. That, in accordance with the vicious system of the day, was still controlled from Washington. Grant had recommended an expedition from New Orleans to Mobile, but, instead of authorizing that movement, it had been turned down and various detachments under one pretext or another had been made from his army. He was therefore becoming sensible of the fact that his forces would soon be scattered over the whole theater of war unless he should lead them in a body in some particular direction. At this juncture Banks called for further reenforcements, but, fortunately, before the matter could be disposed of, orders came from Halleck, September 22, directing that all the troops which could be spared from Mississippi and west Tennessee should be sent at once to assist Rosecrans on the Tennessee River.

This clear but long-deferred order broke the ten weeks' rest and aroused the Army of the Tennessee into intense activity. I was sent three days after the order was received to Cairo with dispatches by the fastest steamer that could be had, but had proceeded only a hundred miles when her boilers gave out. We were at first taken in tow by a gunboat, but I soon transferred to another transport and finally to a hospital steamer, and did not reach Memphis till October 1, nor Cairo till just before midnight of the 2d.

I sent my dispatches, including a report of the forces and their disposition, to Washington at once, and the next day received a telegraphic order directing Grant to go by the way of Cairo, Louisville, and Nashville to Chattanooga. With this I started at once by the same steamer to Vicksburg, but on account of low water, slow speed and inefficient officers I did not reach Memphis till noon of the 6th, nor Vicksburg till just before noon of the 10th. I found Grant prepared for the orders I carried, and in pursuance thereof we started north that night at eleven o'clock with the entire staff, but did not reach Cairo till the 16th. Thus it will be seen that three full weeks, or more than twice as much time as necessary, were spent in carrying dispatches up and down the Mississippi and in getting Grant in communication with the Washington authorities. This was due partly to low water, but mainly to slow and disabled steamers and to the unwillingness of captains and pilots to run at night. I had a strenuous and disheartening time, but by persuasion, threats, and an occasional appeal to military authority I finally got the officers and boats to put forth their best efforts. Being somewhat of a river man myself, I knew what could and what could not be done quite as well as the masters themselves, and insisted on having my way.

Leaving Cairo on October 17, we arrived at Indianapolis on the morning of the 18th, and were there met by Mr. Stanton, the Secretary of War. He had never seen Grant nor any of the staff except Rawlins, but on coming to our car, instead of asking for Grant, he rushed up to Doctor Kittoe, the staff surgeon, who also wore an army hat and

full whiskers, seized him by the hand, and said impulsively: "How do you do, General Grant? I recognize you from your pictures."

The scene which followed was an embarrassing one. Kittoe was quite as modest as Grant and all three were momentarily confused. While they were blushing and Rawlins was straightening out the mistake, the rest of the staff could hardly conceal their smiles. A perceptible interval elapsed before the introductions were completed and the great men of the meeting got down to business. Grant, although entirely without pretension, had been sensibly disconcerted, while the Secretary became at once less talkative and more reserved than had apparently been his intention, but long before they reached Louisville they had recovered and either talked themselves out or become wary of each other. Of course, no one overheard what passed between Grant and Stanton, but it is certain that none of the staff looked upon what occurred on the train or afterward at Louisville as having established close or sympathetic relations between them. The simple fact is, without reference to the cause or to the idiosyncrasies of these two great characters, that they never became close personal friends. They supported each other loyally and efficiently to the end of the war, but neither ever became a devoted ally of the other.

The night we arrived at Louisville, Grant and most of the staff went to the theater, but Rawlins disapproved highly and did not hesitate to inveigh against it as a thoughtless and undignified proceeding. He was at best rather inclined to be taciturn and moody. Deeply impressed by the combined

wickedness and strength of the rebellion and the necessity of putting it down at whatever cost, he allowed himself but little relaxation and no dissipation. He seemed to think it rather a time for penance and prayer than for enjoyment, however innocent, and was unusually concerned for Grant and the outcome of the new responsibilities which had just been imposed upon him. He realized that his general was now face to face with the greatest task of his life. The four military departments of the Mississippi valley had at last been consolidated into a great military division as Grant had recommended the year before, and Grant had been placed in chief command, as he had not recommended. The military administration in Washington, rather than in the field, had been out-maneuvered and beaten by the Government at Richmond. Ten weeks had been lost by the Army of the Tennessee. Rosecrans had been defeated before the reënforcements so tardily ordered from Grant's Department could reach him. The chief point of interest—the strategic center of the entire western theater of war—was now at Chattanooga, where the beaten army had been shut up and besieged. To meet this great emergency plenary power and authority had been imposed upon Grant, and no one knew better than Rawlins what this new responsibility implied. He had personally promised "the eyes of the Government" that his chief, notwithstanding his infirmities, would make good, and his promise had been redeemed in a manner and by means to which no individual had contributed more and of which none knew the details so fully as himself. It is not strange that Rawlins, who had the more sensitive conscience, should that

night at Louisville have denied himself and taken a serious view of the new campaign, the heaviest details of which were sure to fall upon himself.

I spent the evening with him and Bowers conferring about the necessity of reconstructing the staff and of putting brains and respectability into such vacancies as we could find or make. We three had been of one mind from the first as to the men surrounding the General, and now that he was on the threshold of a still greater career we felt deeply concerned that he should find the right sort of officers to assist in the great work before him.

Just before midnight, October 19, 1863, I wrote a friend hurriedly to make certain that he would understand the newspaper reports correctly:

. . . General Grant takes command of the Departments and Armies of the Tennessee, Cumberland and Ohio, as the Military Division of the Mississippi, headquarters in the field. Rosecrans is relieved and Major General George H. Thomas takes his place. Sherman commands the Department of the Tennessee. These changes are radical, of vast moment and most intimately concern the Nation's welfare. I think they are in the right direction and if properly backed ought to give us most decisive results. There are many things connected with them I should like to write—but cannot for want of time. We start for the front at daylight.

X

THE CHATTANOOGA CAMPAIGN

Rosecrans relieved—Thomas succeeds—"Will hold Chattanooga till we starve"—Grant and staff arrive—Meet Thomas—Ride to Chattanooga—Recommended for promotion—Porter introduced—Grant and Thomas—Baldy Smith—Opening the Cracker Line—Ride to Knoxville—Orders for Burnside.

Before leaving Louisville a telegram from Dana reached us indicating that the hard-pressed army at Chattanooga was so in need of food and forage that it might have to give up the place and fall back to a new base on the railroad from Nashville to Chattanooga, and it was this dispatch that called forth Grant's celebrated order: "Hold Chattanooga at all hazards," as well as Thomas' characteristic reply: "I will hold the town till we starve!"

These two messages tell the story. Rosecrans, never having had Grant's full confidence, and not having yet recovered from the stunning blow inflicted on him at Chickamauga, had been relieved from command; the enemy had closed in and the national troops were on short rations, but it was a great satisfaction to know that the imperturbable Thomas would hold the town till he and his army starved. With that stern assurance we made the

trip through Nashville to Stevenson without incident or additional anxiety. Dana met us on the road and gave us full particulars of the great battle and its results, as well as of the situation at Chattanooga and of the rupture of communications between that place and the rear. He explained the break in the railroad in the Wauhatchie valley, the difficulty of bringing supplies by steamboat from Bridgeport through the "Pot and Kettle" and the "Suck," and informed us that the rebel sharp-shooters had command of the river at and below Brown's Ferry. He pointed out the long and rough roads from Chattanooga to Bridgeport through the mountains north of the river and the immediate necessity of shortening the supply line. By the time we reached Stevenson near the crossing of the Tennessee, we had an accurate understanding of the situation. Hooker had already arrived with Howard's and Slocum's corps from the Army of the Potomac. Sherman was on his way from Memphis and, as far as men were concerned, it was evident that we would soon have enough to hold Chattanooga and the intermediate country against all comers if we could supply them properly.

On reaching the end of the road word came from Hooker that he was not well and would like Grant to call on him at his quarters. They had been brother officers and boon companions years before on the Columbia, but had not met since the outbreak of the war. It was at once evident that Hooker was "trying it on" with Grant, and naturally both Rawlins and I were struck by the message we had just overheard. Without waiting for Grant to reply, Rawlins said at once and in a tone that could not be

misunderstood: "General Grant himself is not very well and will not leave his car to-night. He expects General Hooker and all other generals who have business with him to call at once, as he will start overland to Chattanooga early to-morrow morning."

This settled it promptly and unmistakably for Hooker as well as for everybody else. Rosecrans, who had already left Chattanooga for the North, called shortly after Grant's arrival at Stevenson, and in addition to paying his respects, imparted all the information he had to Grant, whom he knew well as his department commander at Corinth and Iuka. The meeting was brief and courteous but not effusive. They were far from sympathetic with each other. Grant's intimates knew that he regarded Rosecrans as an able man, but as jesuitical, insincere, and pretentious and that Rosecrans on the other hand thought Grant rather "a fool for luck" than a great commander.

I had not previously met Rosecrans, but before taking his departure he called me aside and gave me the first information I had yet received that he had applied to the War Department for my detail as colonel of a veteran three-battalion regiment of volunteer engineers, which would in turn give me command of the brigade then under Colonel St. Clair Morton. This flattering news was no surprise, however, for Dana had already informed me that Baldy Smith, the chief engineer, and Horace Porter, the chief of ordnance, had made the suggestion, and had already carried it as far as it could go without the concurrence of the Secretary of War and the Governor of the state. It was an exceedingly kind action on the part of all concerned, and would have

suited me exactly, but, in the excitement of the other duties which fell to my lot, it was soon forgotten. As it afterwards appeared, Grant was about to recommend me for promotion to brigadier general and, pending the appointment, naturally took but little interest in securing the lower grade of colonel for me. With his usual kindly reticence he did not mention the matter till some time afterwards. But meanwhile in grateful recognition of Porter's thoughtful concurrence with Dana, when a suitable occasion presented itself, I said to Grant: "Porter is a man you ought to have on your staff. He was my classmate and roommate at West Point. He was cadet adjutant and is a very able man, fit to command an army corps." Although I heard Grant shortly afterward using those exact words, as far as I knew, he took no immediate action in Porter's behalf, which was somewhat puzzling, but it was made clear a few weeks later as Porter was taking his leave, that Grant had not forgotten him but wanted him to wait till action was taken on certain telegrams he had lately sent to Washington. As it turned out, these telegrams related, first, to my own promotion to brigadier general, and, second, to Porter's as lieutenant colonel, both of which Grant had no doubt would follow. In further explanation he said the Secretary of War had assured him at Louisville that he could make no request in such matters that would not be promptly granted. He added in further explanation that he had himself conceived the idea of making Porter lieutenant colonel and inspector general in my place before he was advised of the steps taken by Thomas and the other generals to secure a higher grade for him, and that he did

not want Porter to reach Washington ahead of formal papers in his case.

These facts, added to what I learned from Rawlins, made it clear that the General did not wish to complicate my case with that of any other officer, however meritorious, who had been serving under another general with another army.

My promotion came in due time, and I may be pardoned for adding that I was the only officer ever promoted from Grant's regular staff to command troops. He early conceived the idea, from my horsemanship, which came to me quite as much in the way of inheritance as instruction, that I would make a good cavalry commander.

I have always regarded it as a most gratifying coincidence that Rosecrans should have asked Halleck, October 17, to make me colonel of a veteran engineer regiment, expressing his preference for me over "all others," while Grant, through Dana, October 29, 1863, urged[1] Stanton to appoint me a brigadier general to command cavalry, for which both Grant and Dana were pleased to say, "he possesses uncommon qualifications."[2] When I joined Grant just a year before, my rank was only that of first lieutenant of engineers. My promotion as assistant inspector general with the rank of lieutenant colonel of volunteers and captain of engineers in the regular establishment had followed. Now, when just rounding my twenty-sixth year to be named by Rosecrans as colonel to command engineers and by Grant as brigadier general to command cavalry, was not only a fine reward for such service

[1] O. R. Series 1, Vol. XXX, Part IV, p. 435.
[2] O. R. Series 1, Vol. XXXI, Part I, p. 73.

as I had been able to render, but was also crowning evidence that I had General Grant's good will and confidence, for both of which I have always been deeply grateful.

While it should be noted that Grant did not meet Porter till the night he got into Chattanooga, nor succeed in getting him assigned to his staff till after he had been commissioned lieutenant general, and had gone east to take command of all our forces in the field, it is noteworthy that the good opinions Porter received from all at Chattanooga as well as from me were conclusive factors in his final promotion and subsequent career. Ordnance officers were scarce, and all the influences of the bureau chief were against their detachment. The final order in the case was not made, however, till Dana returned to his duties in the War Department, but even then it was largely due to Dana's personal intercession.

Meanwhile this narrative has brought Grant and his staff no farther than Bridgeport, where they were compelled to take horse for a roundabout ride up the Sequatchie Valley and across the mountains to Chattanooga. The General had mounted a horse for the first time since his injury at New Orleans, hence his progress was both painful and slow. The road was rough and muddy, and the traveling bad, but he got a considerable distance beyond Jasper that night. As I was anxious to have at least one day in which to study the situation of the beleagured army in its own camp and behind its own breastworks before Grant got there, I was bent on pushing on. Dana, who was familiar with the roads and all the short cuts, went along as guide, and, after baiting our horses and getting something to

eat for ourselves, we struck out eastward up the mountain side. Darkness overtook us soon after we reached the plateau of Walden's Ridge, and after nine o'clock we found ourselves near its eastern edge overlooking the valley in the direction of Chattanooga. It was a wild and somber scene. The forest was almost unbroken, and not a sound reached our ears except the hooting of an owl or the baying of a far-away "honest watch dog." It was a clear, brilliant night and the light of the new moon made it dangerous to proceed. There was nothing to be done but dismount and wait for the moon to set and cover the road with darkness and security. Fortunately we lost but an hour or so, which we passed in conversing about the campaign before us, broken occasionally by poetry and romance. Dana was at that time in the prime of his intellectual life, and there was a charm in his conversation that made time slip by unnoticed.

At ten o'clock we remounted and descended by the crooked road to the north bank of the Tennessee River, which in that stretch runs through a gorge only eight or nine hundred feet wide. The enemy's pickets and sharp-shooters lined the opposite bank for some distance; and although we kept in the shadow of the trees and sought the softer parts of the road so we could be neither seen nor heard, the enemy's riflemen took an occasional crack at us. Fortunately the man who shoots at a sound in the dark shoots wild, and consequently we ran the gantlet and reached the ferry at Chattanooga without delay. Dana knew the guard as well as the ferryman, and got us promptly across the river. Threading the streets of the sleeping town, we reached

Captain Porter's quarters just before midnight. Although we were not expected and his larder was lean, he gave us a hearty welcome. As we were both desperately tired and hungry he made haste to give us supper, consisting of fried hard-tack, salt pork, and coffee without sugar or milk. With characteristic wit our host made this simple fare more acceptable than a dinner at Delmonico's, but when he explained that he could give our half-famished horses only two ears of corn apiece and no hay, we recognized that we were surely within a beleagured garrison on short rations, and that the direct supply line must be reopened as quickly as possible.

Our hunger appeased, we devoted the rest of the night to talking over old times and present prospects. As previously stated, Porter and I had served together at Port Royal and Antietam and had much to tell each other. According to all accounts he had borne himself exceedingly well in the late campaign and battle, and had won good opinions from all. As an officer of careful observation and sound judgment, his prospects for early promotion seemed to be good, but unfortunately he was under orders which compelled him to return to the Ordnance Bureau at Washington as soon as his relief arrived and he could turn over his property. Notwithstanding that Porter and I spent the night without sleep, Dana and I were out by daylight riding through the camps and around the lines of defense. We found the troops cheerful and comfortable, and their position impregnable so long as they were supplied with food and munitions. Although they were on short rations, and had been roughly handled before falling back into Chattanooga, they were now self-reliant

and confident. We found the artillery horses, however, starving for want of forage and the roads to the depots in rear so long and so muddy that the mules could hardly haul enough forage to feed themselves both ways. The situation though far from desperate was grave enough. We could see at least a week into the future, but with falling and wintry weather it was clearly impossible for the army to hold its advanced position indefinitely, strong as it was, unless the railroad to the rear could be repossessed, repaired, and held against the enemy.

This was apparent to all, from the highest general to the lowest private. Fortunately the Washington authorities had already selected and sent out an officer fully capable of dealing with every question connected with the extraordinary circumstances of the case. I refer to General William Farrar Smith of the Regular Engineers. To distinguish him from many other officers of the same surname, he had been designated while still a cadet, and was always known thereafter as "Baldy Smith." He had organized the Vermont "Iron Brigade" and commanded the Sixth Army Corps with credit, but he was one of those distinguished men of the old army whose sharp tongue and sententious speech had done much to make enemies in high place and to mar his immediate career. He was popular with his subordinates, for he was a conscientious, painstaking, and industrious officer who spared no effort to keep his soldiers in good condition or to lead them successfully, no matter how great the difficulties which surrounded them. He had been one of my instructors at West Point, and I had carried orders to him during the battle of Antietam, but up

to my meeting him at Chattanooga I knew but little of him except by hearsay.[1]

As soon as the proper time came, we rode to headquarters to pay our respects to the new commanding general. I had never seen him before, but Dana, who presented me, had fully described him and his imperturbable sangfroid and courage during the campaign and battle of Chickamauga. My mind had therefore become strongly prepossessed in his favor, and I was ready to greet him as an able and reliable commander, but I am free to confess I was not prepared to see in him so many of the external evidences of greatness. Six feet tall, of Jove-like figure, impressive countenance, and lofty bearing, he struck me at once as I have elsewhere said, as resembling the traditional Washington in appearance, manners, and character more than any man I had ever met. I found him as calm and serene as the morning. He received me gravely and courteously, but without the slightest show of uneasiness or concern. He expressed a modest confidence in being able to make good his hold on Chattanooga, and at once inspired me with faith in his steadiness and courage. He intimated that he had never sought command nor, contrary to the popular impression, declined it when offered, but felt himself fully competent to meet all the responsibility that might be laid upon him. And later when I came to know him better, he not only confirmed the impression of perfect self-reliance he gave me on that occasion, but made it clear that the

[1] The character and services of this officer are fully set forth in "The Life of Major-General William Farrar Smith," by James Harrison Wilson, The Rogers Press, Wilmington, Del.

need of supervision from any source had never presented itself to his mind.

In our brief interview he asked after Grant's health, and at what hour he might be expected. As soon as he had my answer he indicated that the General should be his guest till he could select and occupy quarters of his own, and then referred me to Smith for whatever information I might need in regard to the situation of the army. It was a long and busy day, for I continued my investigations with Smith and did not get back to headquarters till nine o'clock that night.

It had been raining since midnight of the 22d. The mountain road was steep, muddy, and slippery, but Grant and his staff, wet, hungry, and tired, had arrived after nightfall. We had parted at Jasper, but from there they had taken a more northern and more circuitous road and had slept on the mountain. Starting early and traveling as fast as their horses could carry them, they left their wagons, baggage, and camp equipage behind, not because they did not need them, but because they could not keep up. Grant had suffered greatly during the long and tiresome ride, and to make matters worse, "Old Jack," his sturdy claybank horse, had slipped and fallen heavily with him, severely jamming his injured leg, just after they had crossed the Tennessee and entered the town.

On getting back to headquarters, I found Grant at one side of the fireplace, steaming from the heat over a small puddle which had run from his sodden clothing. Thomas was on the other side, neither saying a word, but both looking glum and ill at ease. What the greeting between them had been I did not

stop to inquire, but learning from Rawlins that nothing had yet been offered for their comfort, and knowing that Grant would not condescend to ask for an act of hospitality, I took the liberty of saying: "General Thomas, General Grant is wet and tired and ought to have some dry clothes, particularly a pair of socks and a pair of slippers. He is hungry, besides, and needs something to eat. Can't your officers attend to these matters for him?"

This broke the silence and set the machinery of hospitality in motion. It had apparently not occurred to the stately Virginian that Grant was his guest as well as his commanding general, but I had hardly spoken before he called Willard, his senior aid-de-camp, and directed him to find clothes and order supper for the party. Everything possible was done and apparently in the most cheerful manner to make Grant and his staff comfortable for the night. Conversation became free, if not hilarious. Supper was served and in due time quarters were found for all. General Smith and Captain Porter called during the evening and were presented and at once established friendly relations with the new commander.[1] Neither had ever seen him before and both were favorably impressed by his gentle and modest demeanor. They soon became fast friends with him, the first for a year or more and the second for a lifetime. But Thomas's coolness and neglect at first were so apparent to all that Grant made haste to establish his own headquarters, though his wagons did not reach town till the second day afterward.

What could have offended Thomas remained al-

[1] Porter's "Campaigning with Grant," pp. 4-6 *et seq.*

ways a matter of conjecture, but it cannot be doubted that he felt justified in the reserve which he showed towards Grant, not only then but always afterwards. It is certain that this reserve was perceived and imitated by his staff and that cordial and friendly relations were never established between their respective headquarters. Rawlins was one of the first to note a disposition on the part of General Whipple, Thomas's chief-of-staff, an old regular, to raise technical objections, amounting in several instances to personal rudeness in regard to current business, and these became so annoying that he was forced to put an end to them by positive orders. Withal, relations never became cordial or friendly, and this fact in some degree explains Grant's readiness to prefer Sherman, McPherson, and even Sheridan to Thomas, and to charge Thomas with being slow, not only in action, but in his mental operations.

I have always been inclined to think that Thomas, having graduated higher at West Point, entered a more scientific arm of service and served generally with greater distinction, regarded himself as a better soldier than Grant, and that he thereby, perhaps unconsciously, resented Grant's assignment to duty over him. In considering their relations he might have recalled the fact that he had never been in trouble in regard to his habits, and that when they came together at Shiloh and in the Corinth campaign, Halleck had stripped Grant of his troops and given them to him. It would not have been strange if the correct and austere Thomas had said to himself, it is true that Grant captured Donelson and Vicksburg, but was defeated at Shiloh and slighted in the campaign which followed, while I was vic-

torious at Mill Spring, preferred in the Corinth campaign, and saved a great army at Chickamauga. Be all this as it may, it seems to be certain that Thomas acted with reserve towards Grant in the Shiloh-Corinth campaign the year before, had not met him again till the fortune of war brought them together at Chattanooga, and finally was not disposed to change his attitude merely because Grant was now his commanding officer. He doubtless believed to the end that while Grant had put him in Rosecrans' place, it was not because he loved Thomas more, but because he distrusted Rosecrans too much to keep him in command at all.

It was my good fortune to enjoy most friendly relations with Thomas from the start, and to play the part of mutual friend between him and Grant to the end of the war. Much to my regret I was never entirely successful in establishing cordial relations between them, but I shall have occasion during this narrative to point out several instances in which my efforts strengthened the favorable feelings of each for the other. While they were both entirely honorable in their personal and official conduct, I have always thought that Grant was at first more considerate and conciliatory towards Thomas than Thomas was towards Grant. This was certainly the case at Chattanooga, but after all they were both strong men with different points of view, habits of mind, and idiosyncrasies, and it is by no means strange that their prejudices and their preferences should have pushed them in different directions. Whatever their personal feelings may have been towards each other they were both beyond all question loyal to their sense of duty.

The next two days were spent in further investigating the situation at Chattanooga. I found that General Baldy Smith, who arrived shortly after the army occupied the place, had carefully worked out a plan for shortening communications with the rear, had discovered a way to seize the northern entrance to Lookout Valley at Brown's Ferry, and had arranged to lay a bridge across the Tennessee at that point so that the troops coming from Bridgeport might repair the railroad and occupy the valley against the enemy on Lookout Mountain. He had carefully settled all the details, and General Thomas had given the suggestions and plans his full approval. This important point minimized the work of General Grant and placed upon him merely the responsibility of carrying the plans already matured into effect. Smith personally guided him and me to the place at which the crossing of the Tennessee should be made and explained the details of how he would seize the place and lay a bridge for the passage of the troops. As a part of the plan I was sent to Bridgeport on the 25th to accompany Hooker and his troops through Lookout Valley. This movement beginning on the 27th, crossed the Tennessee on a pontoon bridge at Shellmound and reached Whitesides at dark, where we first encountered the enemy's pickets, capturing two men of the Ninth Kentucky Rebel Cavalry. The next day we pushed on through the valley, encountering here and there a small hostile force, and finally in the evening formed a junction with Smith's command at Brown's Ferry.

But, unfortunately, Hooker stopped short of safety in the valley and allowed a portion of his

troops under Geary to go into camp at a place known as Wauhatchie, three miles south of Brown's Ferry, while the rest of his command spread over the country between the two places. The rebels occupying Lookout Mountain could see the disorder on our side and evidently thought the opportunity too good to lose. Accordingly in the dead of night they made a descent and a vigorous attack on Geary's camp and gained a partial success. Hooker himself, in explaining the matter as we rode over the grounds the next day, said if it had not been that Geary's mules became stampeded and galloped down upon the rebels like a charge of cavalry, the dash against Geary's camp would have been completely successful. There is no doubt that the mules did stampede and gallop wildly through the oncoming rebels, but I have always supposed that the repulse of the attack was due mainly to the courage and steadiness of Geary and his men. In telling the mule story Hooker strongly insisted that the Confederates had been so alarmed at what they supposed was a cavalry charge that they threw down their arms and ran for their lives. He claimed that our men after the action picked up over a thousand muskets which the flying Southerners had thrown down. Naturally, I should have believed the story on seeing the muskets, and asked the General to show them to me, but it is hardly necessary to state that they had disappeared. The truth is the rebels carried off about all the guns they brought with them, and that those our men picked up, if there were any such, belonged to our own people. General Hooker did not tell the story of the mule charge again in my presence, but I believe it has grown to

be semi-historical. We lost between three and four hundred men, killed, wounded, and missing, which shows that the enemy's attack was well directed and had plenty of impulse. His loss was only twenty killed and sixty prisoners.

Instead of stopping that night with the column I went on to headquarters and told the General about the disorderly and scattered condition of Hooker's camp. He was at first disposed to send me back with directions that Hooker should draw his command into Brown's Ferry, but upon reflection, concluded to leave matters as they were. The relations between these generals were never cordial and the affair at Wauhatchie did not strengthen them. Hooker was vain and patronizing and his manners were offensive to the modest Grant. They never became close friends, but as soon as the emergency which brought them together was passed, Grant cheerfully enough consented to Hooker being detached from his command.

The shorter "cracker line" was at once reopened, and while the work of rebuilding the bridges and repairing the railroad was going on, careful attention was given to the fortification of the passes in the ridges covering the railroad and the river, so that the line of supplies might not be again interfered with. I was engaged on this work till the 8th of November. All the passes were fortified with earth works. Slashings and abattis were constructed and every known device resorted to to make the country impassable for the enemy. Much of the time I was on foot, because the country was too rough to get over it with horses. Upon one occasion I went from Shellmound to Bridgeport in a pontoon, and upon

another walked from Whitesides to Brown's Ferry. The scenery was picturesque, but the country had been cleared of its forage and food, and there was nothing left in it except the railroad to invite or encourage the enterprise of the enemy.

It was in the midst of this work on November 3 that Rawlins gave me the gratifying information that General Grant had requested my promotion to the rank of brigadier general and said he had no doubt that it would be made. The compliment was all the greater because the next day Grant recommended that a distinguished engineer officer serving with that army as a brigadier general should be transferred to duty on sea coast fortifications, and in reply the Secretary of War requested that he be mustered out. By common consent this was regarded as a step in the right direction, and had it been followed by a rigid adherence to the principle that all general officers who had shown themselves incompetent and unfit for their position should be mustered out, the situation would have been greatly improved, not only in that but in other armies.

While waiting for the completion of the road and the arrival of Sherman's army from Memphis, we had a period of rest at Chattanooga, and during the evenings it was customary for the generals to gather at our headquarters. Upon one of these occasions Thomas, Granger, Wood, Brannan, Smith, and several older regulars were gathered about the fire in Grant's sitting room, all official cares thrown aside and all formality discarded. While cracking jokes and telling stories of cadet and army life, it was pleasant to hear them calling each other by their nicknames. Even Thomas unbent and told

his reminiscences with wit and good feeling. Both Grant and he, though noted for their capacity "to keep silent in seven languages" were interesting if not brilliant conversationalists upon such occasions. It is worthy of note that both were entirely free from the use of profane or smutty language.

Having finished the work in connection with fortifying and making good our hold on the railroad to the rear, I was sent by horse-back overland to Knoxville for the purpose of carrying orders to and conferring with Burnside. He was an officer of magnificent appearance and correct demeanor, but none of his superiors had much confidence in his ability or judgment. It was hoped, however, that he could hold not only east Tennessee against Longstreet, but with him disposed of, could move down the valley in such manner as to coöperate in the final struggle for the possession of upper Georgia. Grant asked Dana as "the eyes of the Government" representing the War Department to go with me, and we left Chattanooga at half past two on the 9th, escorted by fifteen cavalrymen under the command of a Captain Field. Our route on the north side of the river lay through Dallas, Washington, and Kingston. We camped the first night with an outlying infantry detachment where we received a hearty welcome. The weather was cold and the wind high, but a blazing fire of logs in front of our tent tempered the winds and enabled us to pass the night in comparative comfort. We spread our blankets on some short boards which the Colonel (Smith by name) kindly provided, to keep us from the cold ground, and I slept well, but Dana complained that I had taken an unfair advantage by laying my boards lengthwise

while he placed his crosswise and thus hurt his sides badly.

The next day we passed through the camps of one General Spears, an ignorant, loyal Tennesseean, an ardent Union man, but an exceedingly poor soldier, whose methods of command and administration were peculiar. He permitted his men to go home when they pleased, stay as long as they thought best and come back when they were ready. It was this officer of whom the following story is told. Having a section of artillery under a sergeant in his command and feeling somewhat uneasy as to the enemy's movements, he one day wrote as follows:

SERGEANT BROWN,
Commanding Section of Artillery.
Dear Sir:

Immediately on receipt of this order, you will take your guns down to the river, load 'em up, fire 'em off, swab 'em out and report the result. Yours truly,

B. G. SPEARS.

In this case B. G. stood for brigadier general.

In reply the sergeant wrote as follows:

Camp on the Tennessee River,
B. G. Spears, Comdg.

Dear Sir:

In obedience to your order, I have taken my guns down to the river, loaded 'em up, fired 'em off, swabbed 'em out and now have to report the result—nothing in particular. Yours truly,

S. BROWN.

S. in this case meant sergeant.

It was well understood in all that region that B. G. Spears received his appointment through the

influence of Andrew Johnson for loyalty and not on account of his military accomplishments or merits.

At the end of a long march the next day we reached the camp of General Jefferson C. Davis, commanding a division and district north of the river, and spent the night comfortably with him. Pushing on at an early hour next morning toward Lenoir Station, we found Lieutenant Colonel Babcock, chief engineer of the Ninth Corps, who had been with us at Vicksburg and who had just finished a bridge across the Holston. In doing this work he had reconstructed a saw mill, cut the lumber, built the pontoons, spun the yarn, twisted the rope, made the pitch, forged the anchors, and completed all the work in exactly seven days. He gave us an excellent dinner and sent us on that night by train to Knoxville, where we arrived at half past nine. We delivered Grant's orders, received a hearty welcome, and the next day had a full discussion with Burnside and Parke in reference to the situation and the probable course of events in East Tennessee.

We found Burnside exceedingly anxious to cross to the south side of the Holston, claiming that he could support his army in that region for six or eight weeks, although he admitted if he did so that he might not be able to thwart the enemy's movements or prevent his going into Knoxville, which the President, the Secretary of War, and General Grant concurred in regarding as the key point of all that region. Burnside seemed to have a clear enough idea of the relative strength of the opposing forces, the strategic and political considerations in-

volved in the campaign, and of the absolute necessity of holding Knoxville to the last, but when brought face to face with the means by which his instructions were to be carried out, his mind and judgment seemed utterly lost. Instead of drawing the conclusions that were inevitable upon the facts as they existed, he persistently turned to his project of crossing into the country southeast of the Holston by Babcock's beautiful new bridge, as the best course he could possibly adopt. When confronted with the statement that this would not only leave the road open but cost him Knoxville, if not the destruction of his army, and that it was no part of Grant's plan to permit such a sacrifice as this, he consented to adopt the policy which Dana and I laid down for him. This simply contemplated a sturdy resistance step by step to the northward march of Longstreet who was now known to have been detached from Bragg's army and to be on the way to Knoxville. Finally if driven out of Knoxville we instructed Burnside to fall back towards Cumberland Gap by the best road to ensure the safety of his army.

The object of these orders as explained time and time again was to hold our own advantages and keep Longstreet's corps in east Tennessee till after a vital blow should be struck at the rebels in front of Chattanooga. The fact was emphasized that Bragg had weakened himself so greatly by the detachment of this splendid body of veterans that he would surely be defeated by Grant as soon as arrangements could be made to attack him. The tiresome discussion continued till midnight and was only closed after all points were settled and fully com-

municated to General Grant and to the War Department. Even then, however, Burnside declared that his own judgment favored a different policy and that he had yielded only because he believed General Grant would approve our views rather than his own.

Finally I was called back to headquarters at three o'clock by Burnside, saying that the enemy had already crossed at Hoff's Ferry and was advancing on Knoxville. As soon as I reported, the General went over the whole ground again spending the rest of the night in discussing the details of the policy already decided upon and in sending orders to carry it into effect. But in spite of both orders and argument, he still favored the plan of throwing himself south of the Holston and leaving the more important country behind him open to Longstreet. I again pointed out how completely this would defeat the purpose of General Grant, and insisted that he should march out and fight the enemy at whatever cost. At nine o'clock he and his staff, accompanied by us, started by rail to Lenoir Station. We reached there in two hours and found the corps moving to the front for the purpose of verifying the enemy's advance. Fortunately Babcock had already destroyed his new bridge, thus making it absolutely necessary for Burnside to confront Longstreet and delay his march to Knoxville. A sharp skirmish had already begun, which Bowen and Babcock, the brains of Burnside's staff, afterward somewhat derisively designated as "The Battle of Hackberry's Bend."

The principal result was to compel the enemy to move with caution. Incidentally it enabled Dana

and me to pass around the head of Longstreet's columns and take up our return journey to Chattanooga. Our horses having had a good rest and fair feeding, we turned their heads across country towards Kingston, escorted by a detachment of forty cavalry, and after a rapid ride arrived there at nightfall. We could not have delayed another hour nor ridden less rapidly, for had we done either we should certainly have been captured. As it was we passed the road on which Longstreet was marching only a short while before his advance reached the crossing. We were reported at Washington as having been taken prisoners. We found the country in a state of consternation, the loyal east Tennessee farmers fearing that they would lose what little provisions they had left and that the presence of the rebel army would place them again under the dominion of the Confederate authorities.

Passing through the camp of "B. G." Spears on Sale Creek, we found him also greatly excited, but the rebel route lying east of him, he suffered in mind rather than in body. The Honorable Horace Maynard, a loyal and distinguished citizen of Tennessee, born in Massachusetts, accompanied us both ways on our ride and came back with us to Chattanooga where we received a hearty welcome. General Grant had hoped that we would remain at Knoxville, first, because he had no confidence in the fight Burnside would put up without us, and next, because he feared we should be captured in trying to return. Indeed, he had already heard that this fate had befallen us.

This ride of something over three hundred miles to Knoxville and back through loyal east Tennessee

was just dangerous enough to make it romantic. It showed us the loyal "po' white man" of the South in his native hue. Plain, simple-minded, and sensible without sham or pretension; loving the Union because he had been taught to love it; hating the slaveholders' rebellion and caring nothing for "his rights in the territories" because he had no slaves; staying at home when he could and taking no part in the struggle unless he must, because he realized from the first that it was "the rich man's war and the poor man's fight." This was the sum of his political philosophy, and when we look back upon it, the only wonder is that we did not realize it as he did. A political writer has since pointed out that only six and a half per cent of the Southern people had any property interest in slavery when the Rebellion broke out, while ninety-three and a half per cent were naturally and economically interested on the other side. Another writer has shown beyond reasonable doubt that this interesting fact was the underlying cause of the final depletion and disintegration of the rebel armies. The commissioned officers, largely drawn from the slaveholding class and those who sympathized with it, naturally remained with the colors, while the rank and file, drawn from the common people holding no slaves, just as naturally began to desert as soon as they discovered that they had to do all the fighting and had no real interest in the outcome.

This fact also accounts for the rapid recovery of the cotton-growing interest after the war ended. That part of the Southern population holding no slaves and possessing little or no land, when peace came, were nearly as well off as they were before

the war commenced. They had been the principal producers of Southern staples before the war and naturally became the principal producers as soon as it was over. The land was all there and much of it fallow. The horses, mules, and agricultural implements were but little diminished, and so when the fighting and the conscripting ended, it was comparatively easy for the "po' white man" and the negroes at least to begin growing cotton again largely as before on rented land, and this is what they did.

The ex-slaveholders found it harder to get down to work and naturally enough turned to politics. It was this class that wanted to hold public meetings, pass resolutions and give their views about reconstruction, and it was to one of this class that Senator Hoar said, a year later, that if he and his friends would go home and "raise more cotton and less hell," they would probably find that reconstruction in the end would take care of itself.

XI

MISSIONARY RIDGE

Brigadier and inspector general—Sherman arrives—Plan of battle—Details of movements—Claims of Grant and Sherman—Thomas carries Ridge—Granger and Sherman sent to Knoxville—Bridging the rivers—Major Hoffman—Longstreet rejoins Lee—Grant goes to Knoxville—Cumberland Gap—Lexington—Establishes winter headquarters at Nashville.

On returning to Chattanooga, November 17, I found my commission as brigadier general and the usual oath was administered by General Grant, but as we were still confronting Bragg, making ready for a decisive battle, I continued to act as inspector general of the military division without any new assignment. But as there was neither necessity nor time for inspections, I lent a hand, as had always been my practice, wherever I saw a chance for service. I was still the only active regular officer on Grant's staff, and being an engineer besides I found plenty to do, carrying orders and assisting Baldy Smith in reconnoitering the country for a suitable crossing of the Tennessee for Sherman's turning movement against the enemy's right flank and rear.

It should be remembered that Sherman marched

from his camp on Black River into Vicksburg whence he took steamboats to Memphis. From there he was transferred to Corinth by rail with instructions to march eastward along the railroad, rebuilding it as he went. In this way it took just two months to transfer his army corps of four divisions from the Big Black to Chattanooga, while it took the War Department less than two weeks to transfer two army corps from Virginia to the same destination.

Great credit has always been accorded Sherman for the rapidity of his transfer, and he doubtless did his part well enough, but in view of the perilous position of the Army of the Cumberland at Chattanooga, it must be confessed that it was a great mistake to select that route when another and a far better one was open, namely, that by steamboat to Cairo and by rail from Cairo to Louisville, Nashville, and Bridgeport. It was contended at the time, however, that it would be impracticable to transport and supply the army by the single line of railroad from the Ohio River, but when it is remembered that a few months later it was the sole dependence of a very much larger army, while the line Sherman was rebuilding, skirting the northern border of the Confederacy, was constantly exposed to raids and interruption and was not and could not be used to any extent as a supply line, it will be seen that the time occupied in its repair was time wasted and that Sherman going by the other route should have been on the ground he finally occupied a month to six weeks earlier than he was. The railroad could have been repaired later as it was.

But even after Sherman reached Bridgeport, he was unnecessarily slow in marching to Chattanooga.

Before getting within reach of the enemy his columns were naturally enough badly strung out. He was encumbered by heavy wagon trains, and now that rainy weather had begun to make the roads muddy—and there were but few in the country, none parallel—this faulty marching order could hardly be helped as a general arrangement, but it might have been easily remedied for the last day by leaving the wagons in Lookout Valley to follow at leisure while the troops pushed to the front without them. As this was not done, Sherman lost at least two days more in getting into position. To make matters still worse the pontoon bridge at Brown's Ferry broke while he was crossing the river and thus cut off his last division entirely. As everybody else had already reached the place assigned him, within striking distance of the enemy, Sherman's delays gave Grant great annoyance at the time, and had they not been warm friends might have led to sharp criticism and censure. This surely would have been the case had the operations, which were to follow, ended in failure and disappointment. But success wipes out or greatly minimizes individual shortcomings and, as will be shown hereafter, this was the result in Sherman's case.

During my absence at Knoxville all the details for the forthcoming battle had been finally arranged mainly by Generals Smith and Thomas under Grant's personal supervision. The situation was a complicated one. The beleaguered army, reënforced from many directions, now greatly outnumbered Bragg's which had been fatally weakened, first, by the detachment of Longstreet's corps, and afterward by that of Buckner's division. Our center occupied

Chattanooga south of the Tennessee at the entrance of a valley about three miles wide, with Lookout Mountain on one side and Missionary Ridge on the other, but this place had now become an inexpugnable camp surrounded by well-constructed fortifications. It was at last amply supplied from the rear by rail and wagon road, and, although the enemy still had an outlying detachment on Lookout, it was too far from his main body on Missionary Ridge to be a serious menace to Grant's communications or combinations.

Bragg's position was essentially a weak one. His main line held Missionary Ridge about two hundred feet high, fortified by rifle trenches at top and bottom and regarded as secure against direct attack. It covered both the wagon and railroads to the interior of Georgia. Its right rested at the railroad tunnel near the end of Missionary Ridge; its left, held by an outlying detachment, was near Rossville, and the whole was about five miles long with but little more than forty thousand men to defend it.

Grant had within reach nearly twice as many men much better equipped and better supplied in every respect. His plan, stripped of all unnecessary verbiage, was that Sherman should cross from the north to the south side of the Tennessee just below the mouth of Chickamauga Creek by a pontoon bridge, the boats and materials for which Smith had concealed in the North Chickamauga, and after making good his footing, Sherman should drive back or turn the enemy's right, resting near the end of Missionary Ridge. Howard was to advance from Chattanooga, form a junction with Sherman on the south side of the river, and thus strengthen his

movement, while Thomas was to advance to Orchard Knoll and coöperate from there as occasion might require.

Preliminary to all this Hooker was to force his way around the point of Lookout Mountain, followed by Osterhaus, who had been cut off from Sherman, and thus put their combined forces in position to move by the shortest line up the Chattanooga Valley against the enemy's extreme left near Rossville. This was the movement that gave rise to the so-called "Battle above the Clouds" as described by Quartermaster General Meigs, who was at that time exiled from Washington and was visiting at Grant's headquarters. He had never seen a battle, and it so happened that this one, which was merely a sharp skirmish on the nose of the mountain between the rebel detachment and Hooker's advance, did not end till after dark. Seen from Grant's headquarters, below and about two miles away, the flashing of small arms looked like fireflies above a small bank of mist that rested against the mountain side, nowhere more than fifteen hundred feet high. It was picturesque enough while it lasted, but as the rebel detachment on Lookout made but feeble resistance and got out rapidly as soon as it found that the force coming against it was really a formidable one, the affair was altogether insignificant and soon ended. During the night the rebel force made its way around to Missionary Ridge, where it had a much more serious time the next day. So far as the records show, there were at no time more than two thousand men, counting both sides, engaged in this much-exaggerated and misnamed "Battle above the Clouds." It should be noted, however, that Hooker

in his official report, written after the campaign ended, did not hesitate to claim for his various operations a larger number of prisoners than were captured by the entire army at the battle of Missionary Ridge, and that in forwarding this report General Grant endorsed it to the following effect: "The number of prisoners claimed to have been captured by General Hooker, it will be observed, is in excess of the number actually captured by the entire army." This cold and somewhat unusual endorsement shows quite as plainly as a more direct statement that there was no love lost between the distinguished generals concerned in it.

The bridge for Sherman's movement was laid with the regularity of clockwork by Smith and his assistants to the entire satisfaction of all concerned. But to shorten and insure a safe passage for the entire force I was put in charge of the commodious side-wheel steamboat *Dunbar,* and its barges, and not only ferried the advance, but seven thousand men besides across the river between eight o'clock and noon, landing each regiment at the very spot most advantageous to its immediate advance. Thus it will be seen that the passage of the river, which was about half a mile wide, was made with unusual rapidity and perfect safety. Not a shot was fired except at the *Dunbar* on her way from Chattanooga to the crossing, and not an animal nor a man lost his life in the operation. Although it might have been timed for an earlier hour, it was a complete surprise and a complete success, all the details of which from first to last were carried out entirely independent of Sherman and in such manner as to command his heartiest praise. With his

three divisions, of not less than fifteen thousand men, safely landed on the south bank of the river, there was nothing left for him to do but to move against the enemy. The country was entirely open, and, while the ground was high and rolling, the way both to the enemy's flank and rear was straight out from the river. Nothing could have been more favorable to a direct attack or to a turning movement against the enemy's right flank and rear, but from the first to the close of the next day Sherman's movements were slow and ineffective. Instead of pushing resolutely to the attack he lost several hours in digging rifle pits to cover the bridge, and when he finally advanced, found the enemy fully ready and able to resist him. Having discovered the peril he was in, Bragg made haste that afternoon to strengthen his extreme right by bringing troops from other parts of his line. So prompt and vigorous was his action that he made good his position and repelled every attack not only that day but the next. Sherman's men fought bravely enough, but their efforts were disjointed, desultory, and abortive, while those of the enemy were coherent and effective.

The fact is that halting to fortify had cost the Federal commander all the advantages of a surprise and had reduced his operations from a successful turning movement to a direct attack of entrenchments, which from Chickasaw Bayou to the siege of Vicksburg had for him generally been a failure. Why, as soon as he found out what he was up against, he did not throw himself around the enemy's flank, against his communications and rear has never been satisfactorily explained. It may be claimed

that he had not been ordered to do so, but the simple fact is that Sherman, with all his brilliancy, was not the man for such bold and conclusive operations. He had not even reached the tunnel, and never did, but even with this failure there can be no doubt that so long as he held his menacing position on the end of the ridge, enveloping the enemy's flank, the latter could not regard his entrenchments as tenable and would feel compelled to abandon them as soon as our forces in his front were put in motion. And this is exactly what occurred the next afternoon.

The preliminary operations merely resulted in bringing the opposing armies face to face with each other; Bragg was on the top of the Ridge with Sherman enveloping and outflanking his right and Hooker moving against his left, while Howard and Thomas, with overwhelming numbers, occupied the valley in front of him, all in continuous line or within easy supporting distance of each other.

This much accomplished or rendered certain, Grant's orders contemplated a simultaneous advance against the enemy at dawn the second day, but Sherman started late as usual and was soon repulsed. He renewed his attack unaided and was again repulsed, after which he stood practically idle till nightfall. Howard at first did nothing. Thomas, seeing but little to encourage him, stood silent and watchful. Granger, commanding the Fourth Corps of Thomas' army, neither received nor gave orders for an advance, but remained on Orchard Knoll directing the fire of a battery and thus worked himself into a terrible state of excitement. Howard finally moved to the left across Citico Creek to Sherman's

support. Hooker was delayed in his advance to Rossville by the necessity of rebuilding the bridge across Chattanooga Creek, which had been burned by the enemy as he fell back from Lookout Mountain. Thus the morning passed without decisive results. Grant, noting with some impatience that the enemy still held his position in front, modestly asked Thomas if he didn't think he should make a demonstration in Sherman's favor, but Thomas, evidently seeing no opening and not regarding the question as an order, stood unresponsive and silent.

Having seen Sherman's column safely across the Tennessee the day before, I returned to headquarters and, after an anxious night, accompanied General Grant and the rest of his staff to Orchard Knoll, from which the whole field was plainly within sight. At first everybody semed hopeful, but as the day wore on toward noon and afternoon, with nothing done, the situation became exceedingly embarrassing. Rawlins, always an anxious and questioning observer, grew sullen and finally indignant, first at Granger and next at Thomas himself. Baldy Smith, Rawlins, and I formed a group of our own, exchanging opinions freely and frequently on every point worthy of notice. Grant himself seemed anxious but undecided and gave no positive orders, but as time continued to drag with nothing done Rawlins finally, at my suggestion, urged Grant to silence Granger and give Thomas positive orders for a general advance by the Army of the Cumberland, to begin at the firing of six guns at regular intervals from the battery on Orchard Knoll. All thought at the time that the enemy was moving troops constantly from his left and center toward his right,

where Sherman was believed to be pressing him. Every officer on Orchard Knoll was sure he could see such a movement actually in progress, and it was a strong conviction to that effect which at last caused Grant to order Granger to rejoin his corps and then to turn with equal firmness to Thomas and direct him to advance his whole line against the rifle trench at the foot of the Ridge in front. Thomas, recognizing at once the difference between a suggestion and a positive order, sent his aids-de-camp to the various division commanders with orders to move at the appointed signal against the enemy. The final movement was begun without the slightest help from Sherman on the left. Cleburne, commanding in his front, had fought him to a standstill for the rest of that day. Thomas now held the center of the field, and his splendid divisions moved out with the regularity of troops on parade. Led by Sheridan, Baird, Thomas J. Wood, Brannan, and their brigade commanders, they swept across the first line of entrenchments without a pause. The enemy, it is now known, amounted to fully half of Bragg's forces but, for a reason which will be explained later, after one round gave way and, starting on the retreat, never stopped till they reached their main line. The Federal divisions scarcely paused after finding themselves in possession of the enemy's first entrenchments, but pushed on as it were under their original impulse till they reached and swept triumphantly over the top of the Ridge. The enemy had hastily the day before constructed several slight entrenchments between the bottom and the summit, but, for want of sufficient entrenching tools, left them unfinished. It is also claimed that the entrench-

ments on the top of the Ridge were placed on the highest ground without much regard to the command of the slopes up which the attacking force would be compelled to advance. The consequence was that no adequate defence was made either at the bottom or at the top, and in an incredibly short time the entire position was abandoned and the enemy's whole line was driven in confusion from the field.

Both Grant and Sherman to the day of their death claimed that their success on that occasion was due principally to the fact that Bragg had all day long been strengthening his right at the expense of his center and left, but this is now known to have been an error, for, according to all Confederate reports both written and verbal, whatever was done in that direction was done on the day and night before, while on the second and final day of the battle no troops whatever were moved to the right of the enemy's line. A better explanation of the enemy's weakness is that on the night of the 24th and the morning of the 25th one half of each Confederate brigade was holding the foot of the hill, while the other half held the line at the top. This disposition extended to all the troops on the Ridge and the number available gave only a single rank for the final stand with the men about a yard apart. It is also alleged that the superior officers were instructed, if attacked by more than a single line, to await the enemy's approach till within two hundred yards, then to deliver their fire and retire to the works above.[1] At all events this is exactly what they did, and manifestly it was a fatal mistake.

[1] "Military Memoirs of a Confederate," by General E. P. Alesander, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907, p. 475 *et seq.*

Many errors have crept into the accounts of this battle, the most persistent of which is that Grant ordered his troops to halt at the first line of entrenchments. No such orders were given by him or by any one else in authority. The simple fact is that no one either high or low thought for a moment that it was feasible to go further than the first line, and when the troops were seen to be moving, of their own accord, beyond the captured first line of rifle trench up the hillside in pursuit of the enemy it was supposed that they would be repulsed before they could reach the top of the Ridge. Every observer thought they would be so blown and disordered by the rough and exhausting climb that they would have insufficient strength or momentum left to carry the second line of entrenchments. Grant, Rawlins, Smith, Thomas, and all the rest believed that it was impossible to succeed in sweeping over the line which would there confront them, but no orders were issued by Grant or any one else at any time to halt the advance. Looking on with much interest and seeing that our people were not repulsed and were fast approaching the top, I suggested to General Grant that we mount and proceed to the front ourselves with the view of encouraging the troops and pressing home our victory. My suggestion was adopted without hesitation and in less than thirty minutes we were all on top of Missionary Ridge, with the enemy disappearing down its eastern slope. Near the summit we met a few wounded men coming to the rear. They received General Grant with exultation, calling out: "We are now even with them for Chickamauga. All we needed was a leader!"

The victory was quite as surprising to those who won it as to those who lost it. Although both Bragg's flanks had been turned, neither Sherman's operations on the left nor Hooker's on the right had their proper effect in bringing it about. It could easily have been made complete had Sherman fully appreciated his position and moved with proper celerity to throw himself around the enemy's left across his communications before the break took place. With activity on his part the entire rebel army might have been captured. Hooker's position and movements were alarming, but in no case could they have been made conclusive. As it was nearly night when the final rout occurred and Sherman did nothing to complete it, Bragg succeeded in withdrawing his whole army, leaving behind his killed and wounded, and here and there detachments which were captured, amounting in all to something less than two thousand men.

That night and the next day Bragg retreated to Ringgold and, after a stand of but little importance at that place, finally withdrew to Dalton on the road toward Atlanta. Having saved his army he was soon relieved at his own request from further command. His casualties were three hundred and sixty-one killed, two thousand one hundred and sixty wounded, and about two thousand captured, while Grant's were seven hundred and fifty-three killed, four thousand seven hundred and twenty-two wounded. For the numbers engaged these figures are surprisingly small.[1]

[1] Livermore estimates the forces engaged as follows: Effective Federal infantry and artillery, 56,359; effective Confederate infantry and artillery, 40,929.

As soon as the decisive results were fully known Grant detached first Granger with the Fourth Corps and afterward Sherman and Howard with their respective forces to march as rapidly as possible to Knoxville for the relief of Burnside, who was now calling loudly for help, and whose fears it was thought might induce him to retreat from that place if not to surrender it and its garrison.

During the first night after the battle of Missionary Ridge Grant and his staff followed Sheridan's division in pursuit of the enemy several miles beyond Chickamauga Creek, but finding that our own troops were badly separated on the various roads the enemy had taken, the General concluded to return to Chattanooga for the night. Knowing that his subordinate commanders would communicate with him, he thought it easier for them to find him at his old headquarters than at any new ones he might establish. He had already sent Colonel Lagow, one of his aids-de-camp, to find Thomas, but as Grant recrossed the Chickamauga he met that officer returning with the statement that he could find neither Thomas nor his command. Thereupon Grant said: "Wilson, please take this matter in hand and report to me at your earliest convenience in Chattanooga." I set out at once through the forest bordering the creek, and after a ride by compass two or three hours through the forest in the dark, over logs and across ravines, I ran into Baird's division, and finding that the rest of the corps was close at hand and that Thomas had fully reported his dispositions to Grant at his old headquarters, I declined Baird's urgent offers of hospitality and made my way back to the town as rapidly as my tired

horse could carry me. I arrived at headquarters just at dawn, and as I ascended the steps and opened the door into the room which I was using in common with General Grant, he called out: "Is that you, Wilson? I am glad you are back. Of course, I found here all the information I wanted about the troops, and have not slept a wink this whole night, for thinking of what a long, cold, and unnecessary ride I have given you."

It was this sort of solicitude on the part of the General which so greatly endeared him to his officers. Without being effusive he was altogether the most thoughtful and considerate general with whom I ever served in regard to the comfort of his staff and of the troops under his command. It was no part of his practice to give unnecessary trouble or to impose unnecessary work upon any one, and the results were always beneficial to himself. This anxiety to minimize the hardship of others arose perhaps as much from temperament as from personal kindness. Deliberate and careful in his mental operations, he rarely ever found it necessary to change his mind or his instructions, and when the work of his subordinates was completed in accordance therewith it was dismissed for good and all. He never countermarched his troops if it could be avoided, and never changed their destination till the necessity for the change was shown beyond question. If any mistake was made by his staff or by his subordinate commanders he generally assumed all the responsibility for it with the modest declaration that "it was my fault; I ought to have known better, or given more specific instructions."

His orders detaching Granger to Knoxville were

not promptly put into execution, and this was perhaps partly due to the fact that the troops were not expecting so long a march at once and partly to the fact that Granger himself had what was known in the army as a "swelled head," which prompted him to take liberties with his orders. It will be remembered that he had performed an important service at the battle of Chickamauga by withdrawing his division from the Rossville-Ringgold road, marching *au canon* to the battlefield and taking his place on the right just in time to check the successful onset of Longstreet against that part of the line. While this voluntary movement on Granger's part was partly due to the influence of General Steadman, Granger always received most of the credit for it. It made him a popular hero for the time, and in the reorganization which took place after the battle was over gave him command of the Fourth Corps. There was a sort of halo about his impressive head and aggressive personality till the morning of the second day of the battle of Missionary Ridge. His behavior on that day was a great disappointment to all. It was not only trivial, but brought upon him a severe rebuke from Grant for wasting his time on a battery and leaving his army corps to take care of itself. From that day forth his fortune was on the wane.[1] It was no surprise to Grant that Granger was slow in starting to Burnside's relief. After he arrived at Knoxville another incident took place which completed his fall. Longstreet had raised the siege on the approach of the relieving army under Sherman, and had resumed his return march for

[1] See Dana O. R. Series 1, Vol. XXXI, Part I, pp. 258-264. Also Wilson, *ib.*, pp. 265-267.

Virginia. Grant had given instructions for the whole force now in that theater to continue in pursuit of the enemy and destroy or drive him out of East Tennessee. The force available for that purpose was ample, but for some reason beyond the fact that the weather was cold and wintry, our force was badly handled and, instead of destroying the enemy, permitted him to escape practically unhurt. When Christmas came, instead of being well on their way toward Bristol a hundred or so miles up the valley, the commanding officers assembled in Knoxville for the usual holiday jollification. Having dined and gathered about a blazing fire, Granger in his loudest voice said: "Let's send a telegram to Grant," and, calling for a blank, wrote as follows: "We are in Knoxville and will hold it till hell freezes over." Handing it to Foster, who was the senior officer present, he asked: "How will that do?" Whereupon Foster, seeing that the message was both unnecessary and in bad form, wrote at the end of it the word "Tight," meaning to indicate that Granger was under the influence of liquor and that the message should not go. But, unfortunately, the operator did not understand, and sent the message with the extra word added to it. It came thus duly to headquarters, which happened to be at that time in my charge, and, as none of the explanations came with it, I also failed to understand it. When I handed it to Grant on his return a few days later, he was naturally both puzzled and indignant, first because the phraseology used was trivial if not discourteous and, second, because he thought the army and its officers were in close pursuit of Longstreet far on the road toward Virginia. It, of course, completed the con-

viction in Grant's mind that Granger was a trifler unworthy of high command or great responsibilities, and although the full explanation was received after Grant arrived at Knoxville ten days later, he had no further use for the man who sent the despatch.

Gordon Granger was a cavalry officer of the old school. A classmate of Fitz-John Porter, Thomas J. Wood, and W. F. Smith, in the prime of life he had an ideal figure with a fine head, a fierce moustache, and a withering glance. While his port and bearing were those of the traditional swashbuckler, he had natural parts and professional acquirements far above the ordinary. Imprudent and reckless in behavior, he would do himself more harm by a day of senseless braggadocio than he could repair by a month of irreproachable conduct. A compound of opposites, inconsiderate, overbearing, and profane to a degree rarely surpassed, he knew how to be a gentleman of the most courtly manners. Brave, brilliant, and aggressive, a bolt of steel in action, he occasionally fell into fits of indolence and wasted hours when minutes were of inestimable value. His voluntary and timely appearance on the field of Chickamauga lifted him at one bound into the position of a national hero. Dana called him the Marshal Ney of the war, and had he but known how to profit by the high qualities this compliment ascribed to him, he might easily have been one of our foremost generals. But with vanity which was as weak as it was futile he fell into the error of supposing that he had nothing more to do, not even to obey orders promptly and willingly. With fully as much courage, more brains, and a far more impressive figure and appearance than Sheridan, he fell far be-

low that general in the cheerful alacrity and readiness with which he watched for opportunity and performed the duty that always comes to those who earnestly hunt for it. While Granger's soldierly conduct brought him to the battle of Chickamauga without orders and greatly distinguished him, Sheridan's conduct in withdrawing from it and marching around without authority came near being his ruin. On the other hand, Missionary Ridge brought the latter prominently into notice and made Grant his friend forever, while it seriously impaired the fame of the former and caused his ultimate disappearance from the field of opportunity. From that day forth Sheridan's star was in the ascendant, while Granger's was on the wane. Thus the fortunes of soldiers are made or marred when they are least conscious of it.

The relief expedition from Chattanooga to Knoxville finally fell under the command of Sherman, who displayed unusual facility in getting through an unfamiliar region with readiness and celerity. Dana and I accompanied him, I as chief engineer and Dana as the representative of the War Department. The enemy destroyed the railroad bridges on the route, and, as the small rivers and creeks flowing into the Tennessee were mostly too high for fording and generally without highway bridges, temporary means of crossing them had to be provided and it became my place to look after their location and construction.

We left Chattanooga at two o'clock, Sunday, November 29, 1863. The wind was high and the weather bitterly cold, and on crossing Citico Creek one of our pack-mules fell with the pack-man under

him into the freezing water. When I heard the clatter and looked back I could just see the man's head, and, fearing he might get hurt or drowned, I was about to go to his rescue, when he sang out cheerily: "Go on, General, don't wait for me, I'll be along directly."

We reached Tyner's Station, ten miles from Chattanooga, that night and took refuge in a large, white frame house, full of women and children. The house belonged to a high Confederate official, but the women and children were of the native poor white class. The furniture had all been carried off except bedsteads and feather beds, and the house was entirely without provisions. We soon had a blazing fire in what had been the parlor, and our orderly had killed a pig, parts of which we broiled on the coals. As we had brought bread, coffee, and sugar, we had a comfortable supper, in which the family eagerly participated. The old man appeared to be about sixty, while his fair-haired, blue-eyed young wife looked as though she could not be over twenty-two or twenty-three. There were five or six daughters, one of whom was evidently older than her young step-mother, another scarcely a year old. After eating heartily they told us a touching story of deprivation and want, brought about by the soldiers of both armies who had preyed upon them till they were reduced to the point of actual starvation. One after another, from the oldest to the youngest, they began to cry over their sufferings, and, as the tears rolled down their cheeks, the mother, young girls, and babies in turn pulled out their snuff bottles and, much to our astonishment, began to dip snuff. The youngest child could not

talk, but it "dipped" from the start with the best of them and seemed to find just as much consolation in "dipping" as its seniors. The head of the family was past the military age, and therefore permitted to remain at home. He was of the gray-back, east Tennessee type, and it is safe to say neither he nor any of his connections had ever owned a slave, while his wife and girls were as blonde as the morning and all exceedingly good-looking. They were of the pure Saxon type which we found everywhere throughout the mountain regions of Tennessee, Georgia, and the Carolinas.

We started the next morning after a hearty breakfast of pork chops which had frozen during the night and were far more palatable than our first mess from that pig. We overtook Sherman about noon a short distance beyond Cleveland, and, pushing on with him, reached Charleston on the Hiwassee River just before dark. Here we found Howard with the Eleventh Corps repairing the railroad bridge for his troops. This work was in charge of Major Ernest F. Hoffman, an ex-officer of the Prussian Engineers, who attracted my attention by the great energy, ability and good sense with which he utilized the materials at hand and put a safe roadway over the bridge before midnight. A few days later I saw him again building a bridge across the Little Tennessee with army wagons for supports, thus aptly illustrating the advantages of military education and experience.

After the war I employed Major Hoffman as a civil assistant on government works and found him to be a most experienced, accomplished, and conscientious engineer. He was the son of Lieutenant

General Hoffman of the Prussian army, a graduate of the Military School at Berlin, was assigned to the engineers and served with the Pioneer Corps till 1851. He afterward served on fortifications and received a memorial medal for his work. About this time he had a romantic love affair closed by the death of his sweetheart which he commemorated in a novel that became famous for its impassioned and touching eloquence. Then with slow promotion and too much routine, he resigned and took service in the British Foreign Legion as captain and adjutant of the rifle battalion and went with it to the Crimean War. After the war ended he served with the Legion at the Cape of Good Hope, where he distinguished himself for bravery in two campaigns against the Zulu-Kaffirs. He made two voyages to England and back, during one of which he stopped at St. Helena to visit the scene of Napoleon's imprisonment. He was finally mustered out when the Legion disbanded in 1857 and returned to Berlin on a visit. Shortly after arriving there he volunteered and joined Garibaldi, who was then organizing his expedition against Sicily, and served on his staff in all the wonderful events from the first landing till the Garibaldian forces were absorbed into the army of United Italy under Victor Immanuel. He took a prominent part in the siege of Gaeta and greatly distinguished himself for courage and enterprise. He was decorated for gallantry, promoted to the rank of major of engineers in the regular Italian army, and was rewarded by a pension of five hundred lire, which was paid annually to the day of his death. He was a scholar and mathematician of the highest quality, and as such made the acquain-

tance of George P. Marsh, then American minister at the Italian capital, where the latter in due time made it known to the major and perhaps others that foreign officers of experience could find employment in the United States. Being a lover of freedom, and as he called himself "a patriot," he threw up his commission in Italy and, with the Minister's credentials, made his way to Washington, where he was promptly appointed major and additional aid-de-camp. He served with Blenker, Siegel, Schurz, and Howard, winning the confidence and respect of all. It is no disparagement to the best of them to say that Hoffman, who lacked nothing but rank, was superior in every military virtue and accomplishment. Sober, serious, and untiring, as brave as any paladin, and as punctilious as any knight errant, he was always ready and always practical. It was his proudest boast that he was indeed a "Dutch Yankee." Modest and gentle as a woman, industrious and patient as a navvy, an accomplished musician, and an interesting conversationalist, he was one of the most useful and most lovable men I ever came in contact with. When our army was reorganized after the war he was appointed on my recommendation a lieutenant in my own regiment, the Thirty-fifth Infantry. At his examination the president of the board gave him an equation of the second degree to solve, which he did without going to the blackboard. After a moment's pause for another question, he said: "But that is quite simple. Will the board please have the kindness to give me something a little more abstruse in the mathematics?" He was promptly pronounced proficient. Hoffman was so good an engineer, however, that I

never permitted him to join his regiment, but kept him on public works as an assistant, so long as he remained an army officer, and afterward as a civil engineer at higher pay till his death in 1884. I have never known a better or more interesting man.

During the same trip I made the acquaintance of General Schurz and Colonel Hecker. The former was not a military man by profession, while the latter had held only the lowest rank, but both had participated in the revolution of 1848, and Hecker had been president of the so-called German Republic. They were both notable men but of very dissimilar characteristics. One tall, slender, and professor-like in appearance, was commanding a division; the other, of middle height, fine figure, and benevolent countenance, had settled in Illinois and was commanding an Illinois regiment, mostly Germans. Dana and I rode with Schurz much of the way, both going and coming, and found him a most agreeable companion. He had already become famed as an orator who spoke English with perfect accuracy and fluency, but never rose to any great distinction as a commander of troops. While he was zealous and courageous, he probably adopted the military calling too late in life and entered it with too much rank ever to become highly proficient in it. It was during this trip that he and Dana conversed first in one language and then in the other, and in mutual admiration each complimented the other as speaking both tongues perfectly.

Hecker was of a different sort; grave and dignified in bearing, he spoke English imperfectly and with a strong German accent. But he was conscientiously observant of orders and discipline and com-

manded the respect of all with whom he came in contact. On the return journey Dana's horse gave out, and, being unable to borrow or buy another, he was forced to pick up one as best he might. In the last extremity near Hecker's column we saw a horse galloping gaily about a field, and, liking its movements, Dana asked Hecker to direct his men to catch it for him. But it was evidently a horse of the country and strict orders were in force against taking property from the east Tennesseeans, who were assumed to be loyal. The Colonel hesitated for a moment, then, with a pleasant smile lighting up his handsome face, he called out to one of his men: "Hans, you see that horse galloping yonder? That's Herr Dana's horse. Herr Dana is the Secretary of War. You go catch it. Herr Dana will give you ten dollars!" A vigorous but ineffectual chase took place, as the horse, leaping the fence, took to the woods and made its escape.

On our northward march we passed through Athens, Mousecreek, Sweetwater, and Philadelphia, all pretty villages surrounded by fertile fields. The east Tennessee valley is everywhere well watered and fortunately we found it plentifully supplied with cattle, sheep, corn, and hay, which the troops took as they needed and settled for with vouchers on the quartermaster's department. Rumors reached us on the march that Richmond had fallen, that Knoxville had surrendered, and finally that Longstreet had been repulsed and had begun his retreat. On the night of December 3 we reached Morgantown on the Little Tennessee River. Here we found a ford in which the water, three and a half feet deep, was passable by teams and cavalry, but too

wide and too cold for infantry. A bridge was therefore necessary, and, having but few tools, nails, or other materials, we were compelled to tear down houses to obtain lumber for the bridge. By the next morning at five o'clock the structure was ready. It was a simple trestle without tenons or mortises and was put together with square joints, secured by diagonal boards nailed to the uprights and sills. The spans were braced diagonally in the same manner, and while the structure was a frail one, it proved ample with only one or two short interruptions to pass our entire column across the river dry shod.

While the troops were crossing, a large Maltese ass, ridden by one of the men, afforded a laughable example of obstinacy. He had got about half way across the river by the ford when he took a notion to stop in the deepest water almost as cold as ice, nearly half way up his sides. His rider persuaded, punched, cursed, and beat him in every known way, but all to no purpose. The stubborn animal backed square around against the current and stood stock still, the ice-cold water cutting him like a knife for four or five hours. His rider finally took refuge in a passing wagon, and still the stupid beast would not move. Finally, toward the last, one of the teamsters hitched a rope to its neck which he fastened to the tail of his wagon, and then starting his team drew him with his feet braced to the shore, apparently to his intense disgust.

I rode into Knoxville after dark December 5, having learned at Marysville that Longstreet had raised the siege and started to Virginia. I found Burnside, Bowen, and Babcock glad that relief was at hand. They had sustained themselves well, and,

although they had been desperately assaulted, had repelled every attack with great loss to the enemy. Sherman came in the next day and, after a conference with Burnside and his officers, concluded to return with his own corps to Chattanooga, for the reason that he could more easily feed it near there and could get it ready more quickly to join the campaign which must soon begin against Atlanta. The destruction of the railroad bridges between Knoxville and Cleveland and the great amount of depredation which had already been committed in east Tennessee by the contending armies rendered it extremely difficult to longer support so large a force in that region. Both sides had lived off the country in their march, and, although they had paid in vouchers for what they had taken, they left a wide swath of destitution in their wake. In view of the further fact that Longstreet had already got too far ahead to be overtaken, the determination of Sherman to countermarch to Cleveland and Dalton, if not in strict accord with Grant's orders, was the best thing under all the circumstances left open for him. As I concurred in this opinion, Dana and I also concluded to return to headquarters for the purpose of fully explaining the course adopted. It was understood that Burnside and Granger would continue the pursuit of Longstreet, though the slush, snow, and cold weather of mid-winter made all operations necessarily both difficult and slow.

The campaign about both Chattanooga and Knoxville having terminated in our favor, Grant anxiously discussed the question of future operations with W. F. Smith, Rawlins, and myself. The relations between the war in the West and the East

were carefully considered and the conclusion was reached that a general plan should now be arranged for a coöperative and extensive campaign against the interior. Hitherto it had not mattered seriously whether plans in the two widely separated theaters of war were carried on simultaneously or not, but since the great step forward at Vicksburg and the active coöperation between Lee's army and Bragg's, it had become apparent that the entire method of carrying on the war should be changed. By common consent Grant was supreme in the West and would have absolute control of any movement into the heart of the Confederacy. We concluded, therefore, that it was of the first importance that some one should be assigned to command the Army of the Potomac who could be depended upon to cooperate fully in the next general plan for the final overthrow of the rebellion. Many different plans were discussed for the attainment of that end. It was at first deemed most important that Mobile should be taken, and then that Atlanta and central Georgia should be occupied. It appeared obvious that Grant and Sherman would be called upon to undertake those operations, and Grant gave it as his opinion that Smith was the best available man for the command of the Army of the Potomac. Believing that his great capacities would find ample scope in that command and that Smith would cooperate harmoniously and fully with him and Sherman, he asked Dana, who had taken a part in all the discussions, to lay his views fully before the Government at Washington, and, accordingly, Dana set out for that place about the middle of the month. On his arrival he had full and frequent conferences

with both the Secretary of War and the President. General Rawlins started with him, but went to Connecticut for the purpose of marrying the young lady whom he had so gallantly protected at Vicksburg. Before rejoining the army he visited Washington, where he again produced a most favorable impression.[1]

On December 18 General Grant, with Colonels Comstock and Duff and Chief Surgeon Kittoe, went to Nashville, leaving me in sole charge of headquarters. During the lull which followed I ran the current business, and employed my spare time in the preparation of a memoir on the siege and campaign of Vicksburg to be submitted to the Board of Engineers as a thesis for my promotion to the rank of captain. I worked night and day till Grant returned toward the end of the month. For the first time I was troubled with a carbuncle on the back of my neck which the doctor said arose from defective nutrition. That this should have been the case was by no means surprising, for, like the rest of the army high and low, I had lived on army rations supplemented by what I could get from the country. On Christmas I received a dozen boxes of freshly canned oysters, which a friend of General Grant's sent from Baltimore. I divided them with Thomas, Sheridan, and Brannan, and received in return from Sheridan a half dozen quails that one of his scouts had brought in from the head of Sequatchie Valley.

On December 29 Grant returned to headquarters, but started the same day with Bowers, Com-

[1] See the Diary of Gideon Welles; also Wilson's "Life of John A. Rawlins."

stock, Dunn, Doctor Kittoe, and myself to Knoxville. During our operations between Bridgeport and Chattanooga the Quartermaster's Department had built a steamer on which we embarked with our horses, orderlies, and servants, and at 10 A. M. of the last day of the year we reached Knoxville, having transferred to the cars at Loudon.

During my service in the Vicksburg and Chattanooga campaign I rode a little bay horse with black points which General Grant called the "Waif" from the fact that he had been picked up as a stray by my groom during the siege of Vicksburg. He was by all odds the best and most stylish piece of horse flesh that came under my observation during the war. He was only fifteen hands high and weighed about eight hundred and fifty pounds, but judging from his carriage it never occurred to him that he was not equal in size and endurance to any horse in the army. Patient, hardy, and sound, he was as nimble as a cat. With a high head, an arched neck, and so perfectly broken that he could feel on which side of a tree I wished him to pass, he could leap anything that he could put his head over and could carry me for eight hours at a stretch without showing the slightest sign of fatigue. General Grant rode him during the battle of Missionary Ridge, and, for a few days thereafter, wherever he went, never forgot to see that "Waif" was included in the horses taken. On the way to Knoxville the little fellow berthed near one of the cylinders of the boat, when the engineer thoughtlessly turned on a steam cock and gave him such a fright that he broke his halter and leaped overboard. Of course the boat stopped and he was picked up at the shore just as

a native was mounting and making away with him to the country. I rode him afterward from Knoxville to Lexington and almost constantly for six months while commanding cavalry in Virginia. Later I took him with me back to Nashville and used him during the Hood campaign till he was entirely disabled by breaking through the ice on the road to the Tennessee River when the mud froze on his legs. From there I sent him to the hospital at Nashville to rest and recover, and had him back fresh as a lark before the spring campaign began. His military career ended with the long march through Alabama and Georgia. I afterward gave him as a saddle and phaeton horse to my wife. He died in Delaware fifteen years later, not from old age, but from a miscalculation in leaping a marsh-ditch into which he fell and wore himself out trying to regain his footing.

At the first station beyond Loudon, a tall, grizzled, gangling east Tennesseean on the platform asked if General Grant was on that train. When I said he was, the Tennesseean threw up his hands and exclaimed: "Well, my God, there'll be war in this country now!"

Shortly afterward another Tennesseean, commenting on the certainty of the rebel defeat, said in the most feeling terms: "But I hope that won't happen till Sherman and his army have marched through South Carolina so that those people shall have a taste of what they have brought upon this war-scarred region." This feeling was widespread and accounts for much of the depredation afterward committed by Sherman's army in his campaign through that state.

We remained at Knoxville but a few days, and after taking such measures as were necessary for the safety of that region Grant set out on horseback with his staff and orderlies by the way of Strawberry Plains, Cumberland Gap, Barbersville, and Loudon to Lexington, Kentucky, where we arrived on the 10th of January, 1864. The General and his party received every mark of respect from the loyal people of that region. At Lexington he had his first popular ovation, where Leslie Coombs made every effort to induce him to make a speech, but the General persistently declined to say a single word. The controversy was finally settled by his mounting a chair and showing himself to the crowd. He was, however, deeply gratified at the good feeling of the people and especially at the favor extended to him by the ladies of the city, and at the evidences of the many loyal families of that beautiful region.

At Lexington we took train for Louisville and Nashville, where the next day we established headquarters for the winter.

XII

TEN WEEKS IN THE WAR DEPARTMENT AS CHIEF OF CAVALRY BUREAU

Grant, Lieutenant General—Rawlins married—Chief-of-staff—Report to Secretary of War for duty—Prepare new regulations—Horse contractors—Duties of new position—Andrew Johnson's cavalry regiments—Parting with Secretary Stanton.

Grant's headquarters were now concentrated in an eligibly situated, pleasant, and capacious house at Nashville, and all his officers settled down for a comfortable winter, as was then the custom. The armies under his command remained separate and distinct, and this minimized the work of the various departments and left the higher staff officers comparatively free to consider and discuss plans for the future. The first thing in hand was to testify to Rawlins' new wife the high regard in which his brother officers held him. This was done by a purse of $250, which was invested in spoons, forks, cream jug, sugar bowl, and napkin rings for Mrs. Rawlins as a wedding present. This little diversion ended, we turned our thought more earnestly than ever to the future campaign as though the sole responsibility was on us. Every conceivable movement from the Military Division of the Mississippi was con-

sidered. All the important cities, strongholds, depots, manufacturing centers, lines of communication, and military bases, together with such information as could be got, were passed in review night after night, not only between ourselves, but with General Grant. The weight of opinion seemed to favor a general advance from Chattanooga against Atlanta and this was finally settled upon as promising the greatest advantage to the Union cause. Grant, having become the center of all eyes and the hero of the public as the only successful general so far produced by the war, was advanced March 2, 1864, to the rank of lieutenant general and put in command of all our armies, and this in turn necessarily produced a corresponding change in the work of the staff.

I had served sixteen months with him through two great campaigns, and during most of the time had been the only regular officer in daily contact with him. As I have frankly said elsewhere, I joined him with some lack of faith in both his habits and his character, but my opinion of his real worth grew constantly more favorable. I found him modest and unpretentious, but with an even temper and exceedingly sound judgment. He was not then and never became what regular officers regarded as a first-class technical or theoretical soldier. He dealt with large things in a large way, and left details of every sort as far as possible to those below him. He had great faith in both Sherman and McPherson and, therefore, habitually left them absolutely free to manage such movements as he directed them to make in their own way. He had no great confidence in the average political general, but here

and there men from civil life like Logan, Crocker, John E. Smith, Morgan L. Smith, and Gresham won his entire confidence. He looked upon Logan as a brave, ambitious, and competent officer, but regarded him as a habitual grumbler who claimed to be doing all the work and getting less than half the praise to which he was justly entitled. Both Sherman and McPherson were credited by the country at large and especially by the professors at West Point with supplying him with brains. Many thought that they formulated as well as executed his plans, but to those of us on the inside this claim was not only baseless but absurd. Sherman was a talented, talkative man, widely read in military science and military history, and had brilliant views on all subjects, but his critical mind was destructive rather than constructive. He had opposed the great turning movement of the Vicksburg campaign, but had cooperated loyally to make it a success. He had won Grant's confidence and support by giving him sympathy and encouragement in the Corinth campaign. They both had the highest respect for C. F. Smith, who was commandant while they were cadets at West Point, and they never quite got over the sense of awe which they felt in his presence when they were boys and he the ideal soldier of the regular army. Sherman expressed only the popular opinion when he declared that neither he nor Grant would have ever been heard of but for the untimely death of that admirable officer. This may not have been altogether true, for Grant at least outranked them both from the start and in the exercise of his functions had the constant aid of a very strong adlatus and adjutant. I refer of course to Rawlins,

who showed himself from the first to be a vigorous, virile, aggressive character who commanded attention wherever he appeared. As we have seen, he had no technical military knowledge whatever, but his intimate relations with Grant from the time he joined the staff put him at the very center of influence and responsibility, and in the emergencies of Grant's military life gave him not only the last word, but in more than one instance the controlling one. Withal his place was difficult to fill. Conscious of his own shortcomings as a military expert, he necessarily fell back upon common sense and the simple obligations of daily life as the best guides in counseling his chief. He was the one man who never feared to offer his opinions or to advocate them with all his might, whether they were sought for or not. He asserted from the first conversation he ever had with me that Grant was "a good man," and that we could "win with him if we could stay him from falling". Certain it is that he was never rebuffed and that the leading officers found in him a safe and direct channel through which they could always reach their common chief with the most delicate suggestion after it had received Rawlins' consideration and approval. He was as far from being a sycophant or a time-server as any man I ever knew, but, eliminating and effacing himself and his personal interests absolutely, he never failed to speak out with fearlessness and independence when he thought the interests of his chief or of the country required it. In this he was habitually respectful, but, as has been shown, there were occasions when he did not hesitate to express his most "intense vehemence on the subject matter" in tone and

language which no man could affect to misunderstand, and it was this well known fact that so fully justified Dana in saying as he did, just after the close of the Chattanooga campaign, that "the best brains ever supplied to Grant from any quarter were supplied by the generals of his own staff."

In further explanation it may be truly said that great commanders as well as princes and potentates generally get all the advice and assistance they need, and the most fortunate are those who have it winnowed by such masterful men as John A. Rawlins. The combination in Grant's case was a creditable and fortunate one. The great character which passed into history under the name of Grant was lacking and indeed never acquired the technical perfection which characterized the great soldiers of history, but, as the sequel showed, it finally achieved signal and complete success. If this was at a greater expense of life and treasure than it might have otherwise cost, every American should rejoice that the country's resources in both were equal to the demands made upon them, and that there were two men at least willing to pledge their character and lives to the successful outcome of the great enterprise in which they were engaged.

My stay at Nashville lasted from January 12 to January 20, during which I took part in discussions between Grant, W. F. Smith, and Rawlins in reference to future plans, but in the midst of them I was lifted out of that environment by an order from the Secretary of War, handed to me by General Grant, directing me to proceed to Washington for the purpose of taking charge of the Cavalry Bureau for a period of sixty days, or till active op-

erations were resumed in the spring. It seems that at Dana's suggestion the Secretary had asked the General to lend me to the Department for that period, at the end of which time I was to return to active service in the field. The terms of this proposition were of the most flattering character.[1] Dana telegraphed as follows:

Washington, D. C.,
January 17, 1864, 1 P. M.

MAJ. GEN. U. S. GRANT:

Will it be practicable for you to spare General Wilson for a time to come here and get the Cavalry Bureau into order and honesty?

Of course, the Department will make no order which will deprive you of the services of such an officer without your full consent, but the necessity for him is very great, and I know of no one else who can perform the duty as well as he. It is a question of saving millions of money and rendering the cavalry arm everywhere efficient. You can have him again as soon as he gets the machine in good working order, say in sixty days. If you spare him let him come directly. He will be appointed chief of the bureau. Please answer by telegraph.[2]

C. A. DANA.

Grant replied the next day as follows:

Nashville, Tenn.,
January 18, 1864, 11:30 A. M.

C. A. DANA, ESQUIRE,
Washington, D. C.

I will order General Wilson at once. No more efficient or better appointment could be made for the place.[3]

U. S. GRANT,
Major General.

[1] O. R. Series 1, Vol. XXXII, Part 2, pp. 115, 1131.
[2] O. R. Serial No. 58, p. 115.
[3] *Ib.*, p. 131.

Inasmuch as I had never set a squadron in the field I was greatly surprised at the Secretary's request, but I had no option and at once proceeded to Washington, relying on the understanding that I should rejoin the general in the field on the resumption of operations in the spring. General Grant was to have accompanied me as far as Louisville, but on the eve of my departure was compelled to go to Chattanooga for the purpose of making final dispositions for the expulsion of Longstreet from east Tennessee. That General had shown a disposition to countermarch toward Knoxville and had compelled Granger and Parke to retreat from Dandridge toward Saulsbury Plain.

Immediately after reaching Washington I called on the Secretary of War. He received me with a scowling countenance. He was evidently disappointed with my youthful appearance, but proceeded at once to lay down the law: "I have sent for you," said he, "because I understand you do not fear responsibility. My life is worried out of me by the constant calls of the generals in the field for more cavalry horses, and by the dishonesty of the contractors who supply us with inferior horses, or who transfer their contracts to sub-contractors who do not fill them at all. They are a set of unmitigated scoundrels, and I want you to reorganize the business, drive the rascals out and put the cavalry service on an effective footing. I don't want you to fail as Stoneman did, nor to say, as Garard did: 'I cannot hope to surpass the efforts of Stoneman.' Don't tell me you can't swing the job. I give you *carte blanche* and will support you with all the resources of the Department. While I have called

you here for this particular purpose, please remember that if you see anything else in the War Department which requires attention or ought to be changed you are to come and tell me about it. That will do, sir." He afterward told a friend of mine that he thought my body was too short for my legs.

With this dismissal from the great war minister's presence, I proceeded directly to the office of the Bureau in what was known as the Chain Building, and entered at once on my duties. The first thing that engaged my attention after installing my able classmate, James P. Martin, as adjutant, was to reorganize the system of horse inspections in such way as to ensure with greater certainty the delivery of sound and serviceable horses. To this end, with the assistance of the bureau officers, I prepared a new system of inspection. Each board was to consist of three persons, one regular and one volunteer cavalry officer, and one citizen expert, at each purchasing depot. The regulations provided among other things for branding horses already rejected for unsoundness if presented again before the unsoundness had been removed, with a hot iron under the mane, imprinting the letter "R" permanently on the skin.

Shortly afterward several of the principal horse contractors invited me to dinner and showed a disposition to extend other civilities, but, of course, these invitations were declined. A letting was near at hand for eleven thousand horses to be delivered at St. Louis, Indianapolis, Columbus, St. Paul, and Elmira. The new regulations had gone out and the bids for the horses were soon to be opened. On the day before I invited all the known bidders to as-

semble at my office at three o'clock in the afternoon. When they were all there I notified them verbally that the laws and regulations as they then were would be enforced to the letter, that every man offering horses would be required to fill the contract awarded him exactly in the manner specified therein, that no contracts could be sublet, and that every successful bidder would not only be compelled to enter into, but carry out, his contract to the letter. I expressed the hope that all this would be cheerfully acquiesced in, but concluded with the remark that it was my duty to see that every man filled his contract, and if I couldn't make him do it peaceably, "I should make it out of his hide." This it must be confessed was rather a rough speech, but from the stories I had heard I deemed it necessary. The next day the bids were opened and the contracts awarded. The lowest bidder for horses at St. Louis had been a good while in the business and seemed to be competent and trustworthy, but, inasmuch as he received an award for only half instead of all the horses at that point, he remarked as he left my office that he didn't think he would enter into or fill the contract awarded him. As he was leaving I remarked: "You had better think it over carefully before deciding on your course, and in doing so it will perhaps be well to remember that, according to the records of this office, the Government now owes you for a thousand head of horses, not one dollar of which will it pay if I can prevent it, till you have not only entered into your new contract, but shown that you intend to carry it faithfully into effect. Think it over, Colonel, and let me hear from you to-morrow."

The next morning the doubtful Colonel presented himself with a smiling countenance and said: "General, I have carefully considered the remark you made as I was leaving your office last night, and, seeing that you have a decided advantage in the matter, I intend to enter into that contract and I give you every assurance that I shall faithfully carry out all of its provisions."

It is my pleasant duty to add that he made good on every count, furnished his two thousand five hundred head of horses within the specified time, all of which were fully up to the standard of the new regulations, but he was the only one of six successful bidders that carried his contract through. All the others failed entirely, one or two did not sign, and several undertook to sublet their contracts after they were awarded, but not another furnished the horses awarded him. On reporting the facts with my recommendations to Dana, then Assistant Secretary of War, he ordered that each of the defaulting contractors should be promptly arrested, brought to Washington, thrown into the old Capitol prison, and tried by court martial. Each was found guilty of violating the law and sentenced to fine and imprisonment. The incident created a good deal of excitement among contractors and the politicians backing them, but from that time forth the supply of cavalry horses became much more regular, and the quality greatly improved. While the price rose from $125 to $150, the horses proved to be much more serviceable and the cavalry rose rapidly from that day to the high state of efficiency which it reached before the close of the war. The new regu-

lations were effective, but my course in carrying them out made me many active enemies.

The bureau over which I presided also superintended the purchase and supply of arms and equipments for the cavalry service, but there was no such necessity for radical measures in that branch of the business, as the details of manufacture and inspection were conscientiously and honestly looked after by the regular officers of the Ordnance Department. It was under my administration, however, that the Spencer magazine carbine was adopted as the standard for the cavalry service, and the division which I commanded in Sheridan's cavalry was the first in the world completely supplied with that or any similar arm. I may also add that the three divisions of the cavalry corps of the Military Division of the Mississippi, which I led in 1864 and 1865 through Tennessee, Alabama, and Georgia, was the first command of that size in the world ever completely supplied with magazine firearms of any sort. The Spencer carbine carried a magazine in the stock from the butt to the trigger guard. It held six cartridges, with one in the firing chamber. The whole could be fired as rapidly as the guard could be thrown to the front and pulled back, by the simple mechanism designed for that purpose. It was by all odds the most effective firearm of the day, and I have never had any doubt that its machinery was easily adaptable with such minor changes as might be found necessary either in the size of the cartridge or the diameter of the bore. There was no other arm to be compared with it in the National, Confederate, or any other service at that time, and consequently no charge made with it

in hand ever failed. To the perfection of this carbine and the rapidity with which it could be fired I attribute the uniform success of the assaults made against the enemy's entrenchments at Nashville, Selma, West Point, and Columbus. It was surely of great advantage to the Federal cavalry, yet many older and more experienced officers looked upon it with disfavor. Conservatism in such matters is frequently far more costly than the most reckless over-confidence.

My ten weeks in Washington that winter was a time of great activity. My office hours were from eight o'clock till four, and were given to the faithful study of the needs of the cavalry service and the means by which that service could be best supplied and made most effective. The most pressing want was for remounts, and, while large numbers of horses of superior quality were bought, they were necessarily always sent to the troops in the field without proper breaking or training. At no time could a sufficient number be had to keep the old regiments properly supplied. In view of this fact the efforts of the bureau were directed against the organization of new cavalry regiments, and this sound policy brought me in antagonism to many ambitious governors who favored the cavalry service because it was more showy and therefore more popular than the infantry. It was always easier to raise new regiments than to fill up the old ones. Among those who favored this idea was Andrew Johnson, then a brigadier general of volunteers and provisional governor of Tennessee. He sought authority from the Secretary of War to raise twelve regiments of twelve months' men from the loyal

citizens of his state, but so long as I remained in the bureau I frustrated his plans by representing that with all our efforts we could not secure enough horses for the old regiments, that it took much longer to make good cavalry than good infantry, and that it was wasteful and costly in the extreme to permit the organization of such regiments as those favored by Governor Johnson. Curiously enough, when I took command of the cavalry corps, Military Division of the Mississippi, in October of that year, I found that the Governor had succeeded in organizing and mustering his twelve regiments into the army. They were, of course, stationed in the state so they could easily get home, and consequently less than half of the officers and men were present with the colors. It was a great disappointment to find these regiments under my command, but it was my plain duty to do the best I could to make them effective. Under the ample authority allowed me I scattered them among the Northern troops where they would have closer supervision and better discipline, but many of the officers were untrained and inefficient. A number were drunken rowdies who used their authority to terrorize the people among whom they were stationed. Several field officers were court-martialed and dismissed for absence without leave, and this made it necessary to fill the vacancies with better men, not always the next in rank. In such cases the coöperation of the Governor, who had the appointing power, was regarded as essential, and under the advice of General Thomas I called upon Andrew Johnson at the Governor's Mansion for consultation. He received me with coldness and reserve, and, when I stated my busi-

ness, which I did frankly and fully, he became angry and burst out with the declaration that he would not permit me to asperse the Tennessee cavalry or its officers, alleging that they were as good as any in the service. As this was far from the fact and we were from the start widely at variance on the subject, I rose to take my leave, remarking: "I am sorry I called upon you, Governor. I hoped to obtain your friendly coöperation, but I have made a mistake and will try to get on without your help." Whereupon he said: "Why are you sorry?" To which I replied: "Because I am disillusioned. I came here thinking that you were a statesman and patriot, but I am sorry to find that you are merely a politician of the common sort. I read your speech in the Senate against secession and I said to myself, here is a man worthy to be President, but this interview convinces me that I am wrong."

At this frank but perhaps indiscreet remark, the Governor instantly changed his manner and declared his anxiety to coöperate with me to the fullest extent, but the facility with which he metamorphosed himself convinced me that he was both insincere and untrustworthy, and, although he then begged me to be seated and give him my views fully, I was so discouraged by my reception that I declined, merely remarking that, as he was a brigadier, while I was serving as a brevet major general under the President's assignment, I had no doubt I should be able to carry out all necessary measures for the establishment and maintenance of discipline in my command without either his help or his approval.

This view of the matter had evidently not occurred to him, and, although it was followed by many

friendly assurances on his part, I dropped the subject there and took my leave. I met him several times afterward while Hood was confronting us at Nashville, and am glad to say he was always effusive in his offers of friendship and coöperation in what he called "our plan for the reorganization of the Tennessee cavalry," but I never again asked for his assistance. Under authority granted me by the War Department a few weeks later I impressed his saddle and carriage horses along with those of all other non-combatants in that region for the purpose of remounting the cavalrymen who had lost their mounts in the preceding campaigns. I broke up the separate division containing his regiments and transferred them to such of the older divisions as were most likely to be ordered out of the state. Where necessary I filled vacancies as they occurred, whether from court-martial or otherwise, by assigning veterans of the same grade from Northern regiments which had been reduced sufficiently in strength to spare them. Fortunately we had plenty, such as George Spaulding of Michigan, who were experienced and gallant officers ready to embark in any service which with a few hard knocks promised them a little true glory. The plan worked well and soon brought the Tennessee cavalry, especially the Twelfth, which Spaulding led till the end of the war, to a high state of efficiency. If there was ever any fault found with it by those actually concerned I never heard of it, but the sequel a few months later shows that Andrew Johnson never quite forgave me for the plain speech I made to him while military governor.

It will be recalled that Andrew Johnson was

elected vice-president in November, 1864, and shortly after the inauguration succeeded to the office of President through the assassination of Lincoln. By that act he became commander-in-chief, and, although the war was at an end, he did not forget. As I passed through Washington late in December of the next year on my way North I felt it incumbent on me, as was then customary, to pay my respects to the President at the Executive Mansion. The rest of the story is soon told. This was my first meeting with him since leaving Nashville in pursuit of Hood and he received me promptly, but with all the austerity and dignity he could command. He made no responses to my respects and good wishes, but with the fewest words and the most formal behavior he brought my call to an end, and, although I was just up from Georgia where reconstruction had already become a live issue, he asked no questions, and made no allusions to the past, but the scowl on his heavy face showed that he not only had not forgotten my plain talk, but was fully conscious of the superior rank he now enjoyed. I was married on the third of January and in just three days thereafter I received a formal order, issued by the President's authority, mustering out of the service Major General James H. Wilson "at his own request" and directing him as a captain of engineers to report at the end of his leave to the chief of his corps for duty.

In further explanation I should perhaps state that the end of the war found me in command of central Georgia, and it was General Grant's purpose when the Southern states were divided into military departments to assign me to the command of the

Department of Georgia, but President Johnson promptly turned that down and gave the place to General Steedman. After holding command of the District of Macon, to which I succeeded by seniority, for several weeks, I concluded I had too much rank for such command, and, as I did not want to stand about with nothing to do, I made a formal application to be mustered out. This request having reached the President in due course was promptly granted and the formal order was issued, but as it passed through army headquarters Grant held it up and asked me to remain in the service as a major general for the present. As he assured me that I should have an appropriate command, I quite willingly consented, but Johnson had evidently not been consulted, and when I called, as above related, to pay my official respects, it put him on inquiry with the result that he directed the original order to be reissued, and this accounts for the muster out at my "own request."

The incident serves to show that it is not safe for an army officer to offend even the vice-president of the United States by too much frankness. The descent from the higher rank a few months earlier was of itself without consequence or inconvenience, but the reduction of revenue from a major general's pay and allowances to those of a captain, with a wife to provide for, was a serious embarrassment. From a thousand dollars a month to less than two hundred, with a debt of eight hundred on top of that, was a come down long to be remembered, but withal it had its amusing side. I never saw Andrew Johnson after that, but I have every assurance that his troubles were greater than mine. I had no sym-

pathy with his political vagaries, but I never believed that he had committed high crimes or misdemeanors for which he should have been either impeached or convicted. He was a coarse, obstinate, self-willed man of low tastes and instincts, but he was also frank, courageous, and loyal to his convictions, and his bitterest enemy never intimated that his hand had been sullied by an ill-gotten farthing.

Stanton was a man of altogether different type. A learned lawyer, an ardent patriot, and a most tireless worker, he was, besides, the least politic man I ever met. No one could meet him without admiring his tremendous energy and comprehensive judgment, but he excited neither affection nor sympathy. He was rough, overbearing, and outrageous to his inferiors; negligent and contemptuous toward his equals, and, I do not doubt, at times bold and uncompromising with his superiors. Dana, assistant secretary of war, was one of the few men in office who did not seem to fear him, and through Dana I transacted my business requiring the sanction of the Secretary. Notwithstanding Stanton's invitation to call upon him whenever I had any suggestion to make, I met him only twice during my stay in Washington. The first time was for the purpose of informing him that my management of the Cavalry Bureau had aroused the animosity of the contractors and their political backers, several of whom in both the House and the Senate had openly threatened to prevent my confirmation as brigadier general and had threatened vengeance against the Secretary of War if he dared to approve my action. In the interview which followed I gave him the

name of one senator from the northwest and one representative from Pennsylvania, whereupon he burst out vehemently: "Oh, I know them. They are both d—d cowards; neither one of them will ever come within five hundred yards of the War Department. I'll take care of them; you can leave that to me and go fearlessly about your business."

The order relieving me from service in the Cavalry Bureau came April 7, but before starting to the field I called upon the Secretary to pay my respects and take my leave. Inasmuch as he had invited me to make such suggestions as might occur to me for the betterment of administration, I ventured, in recalling that circumstance, to say: "Mr. Secretary, I regret to inform you that a mistake has been made in assigning Colonel Ekin, the Quartermaster's Department, to duty as chief of the Bureau." Instantly he flew into a rage, exclaiming: "What in hell is the matter with Ekin?" I replied: "Nothing except he is a volunteer with neither rank nor experience for the position." The Secretary rejoined: "Why can't he give his orders in my name?" To this I replied: "He can, but you will not have the time to explain what you want done, and he will not have the knowledge to decide what he should do." The Secretary, with increasing anger, and a still louder voice, then said: "Well, I wish the whole d——d thing were in hell. What do you recommend?" In reply I suggested that General Halleck, chief of staff of the army, should have supervision over the Bureau, explaining that Colonel Kautz, my principal assistant, an experienced old officer, aided by Colonel Martin, the adjutant general, also an able officer, would be com-

petent to carry on the business of the Bureau without delay or interruption, and especially without annoying the Secretary with the details. My suggestion was accepted, and, so far as I know, the results were satisfactory, but it may be remarked that the withdrawal of Kautz for duty in the field a few weeks later placed the burden more firmly on Halleck's shoulders. As he was far from being a practical soldier, he came to the conclusion before the war ended that the cavalry was but a poor arm at best, and that horses enough could not be found to supply the organized regiments with remounts.

XIII

SERVICES IN WASHINGTON

Administration and duties of Cavalry Bureau—Horse-purchasing stations—Governors Andrew, Morton, and Dennison—Grant at Nashville—Dine with Lincoln—Lincoln and Ward Lamon—Discontentment with government—Loyalty of army—Return to field service.

My services in the Cavalry Bureau at Washington extended from January 23 to April 7, 1864, or about ten weeks. It ended in accordance with the understanding between General Grant and Secretary Stanton at the time the detail was made. It covered a wide range of subjects connected with the cavalry service, as fully shown in the records and correspondence of the Bureau. They touched every question that could arise in regard to the organization, equipment, mounts, remounts, armament, instruction, efficiency, and standardization of that most expensive arm. The purchase, supply, and care of horses at the depots, their preparation, and issue for service, their care and recuperation when sick or worn down by overwork and exposure required constant supervision and involved daily correspondence by telegraph and letter with army commanders, chiefs of cavalry, horse inspectors, Bureau officers, commanders of camps, and governors of

states. I was occupied from morning till night, week days and Sundays, not only with those matters, but with senators, representatives, contractors, manufacturers, and inventors. It was my duty to serve as a breakwater to the Department and a protection to the public treasury against fraud and spoliation. When it is remembered besides that in doing all this it was necessary to keep myself solid with those in authority over me, without running to them with details, it will be readily understood that I had no time for play, and that my job was no sinecure. I was then in my middle twenties and absolutely without general experience or any but the most superficial knowledge of the business world. I had no guide but army regulations and standing orders and what I had learned at West Point, supplemented by my short service after graduating, in regard to organization, supply, maintenance, and administration of armies and their several branches. It follows that I depended mainly upon my capacity to gather facts and to apply common sense and good judgment in the use of them.

From the first I made it a rule to lay nothing over, but to take action upon every case as it arose. This I learned from Dana, who had by all odds the greatest capacity for work and was the best administrator I ever met in public office. With intense powers of concentration he disposed of one case after another exactly as a competent mason lays bricks. He hardly got one settled in place before he took another in hand. And thus it was all day long, week in and week out. It was my good fortune to room and board in the same house with Dana. We went to our offices together in the morn-

ing and left them at the close of office hours in the afternoon. When our day's work was done, it was our custom to go out on horseback for an hour and a half and on Sundays to visit the Giesboro depot and camp of instructions which I had early placed under the command of Colonel Lowell, of the Massachusetts Cavalry. We led a strenuous life, devoting our whole time and attention to the public service and to the cause of the country. We accepted but few invitations, in fact, none except such as came to us in the way of duty. As soon as I got the machinery of my Bureau in condition to transact business with certainty and dispatch, I sought and obtained authority to visit New York, Boston, Elmira, Louisville, Indianapolis, St. Louis, Cincinnati, and Columbus for the purpose of inspecting horse-purchasing stations, conferring with the quartermasters, inspecting officers, and governors.

At Boston I made the acquaintance of Governor Andrew, at that time almost the first of the so-called war governors. I found him full of interest in all that pertained to the organization and supply of the army. He was bold, vigorous, and active, and not only promised but gave me every assistance in his power. At Columbus I met Governor Dennison, and at Indianapolis Governor Morton. With such men as these coöperating and supporting the plans of the Government, it was easy to command the resources of their states in the matter of troops and other means for carrying on war. Morton was evidently a more rugged character than either Dennison or Andrew. With less learning and less suavity than either, he was a tremendous force and bent all his energies to supporting the war against the Con-

federacy. He was an excellent manipulator of public opinion, and by his strong will and vigorous management called forth the resources and commanded the support of the loyal men of his state. On the other hand, he forced all sympathizers with the Rebellion into the open or into secret organizations for giving it aid and comfort. He kept a close supervision over the leading officers from his state in the army, and did his best to make them look to him rather than to the general government for support and promotion. For this reason he was never altogether popular with the commanding generals in the field. Neither Grant nor Sherman became particularly intimate with him, and it was with reference to Albin P. Hovey, one of the best of the Indiana generals, that Sherman made his celebrated remark: "If Washington is the place to get promotion, the army ought to change front on Washington." But, withal, the Indiana generals were a vital and virile set. Without those qualities they could never have obtained either the commissions or the support of Morton, and without Morton's help several of them would have failed to reach the rank of general officer.

During the trip west I ran down from Louisville to Nashville for the purpose of conferring with General Grant, who was still at that place considering plans for the future conduct of the war in his military division. But it will be recalled that immediately after his success at Chattanooga he had become the cynosure of all patriotic eyes. To Donaldson and Vicksburg he had now added Missionary Ridge, thus making himself the only entirely successful general that the war had so far developed,

which, in turn, led to a popular call for the creation of still higher rank and the promotion of Grant to fill it. It was in response to this call that Congress a few weeks later revived the grade of lieutenant general, which the President assigned to Grant, with the command of all our armies.

But it would be misleading to state that the call was instantly complied with. Notwithstanding his tremendous success, Grant was but little known in Washington, and there was among the leading members of the cabinet and of the Senate a lingering doubt as to his entire trustworthiness. Immediately after arriving in Washington I was consulted by such senators and representatives as I knew or chanced to meet in regard to his fitness for the promotion and for the great power which it would place in his hands. Washburne, the member of Congress from his district, was the most potent and aggressive factor in the scheme of reviving the lieutenant generalcy and giving it to Grant. He was bold, active, and persistent in advocating the measure, and was, besides, the firm friend of Rawlins and his close ally in every measure for Grant's advancement. I boarded at the same house with him, and from the date of my arrival gave him and the measure he was advocating my most active and unqualified support. We conferred about it in every possible aspect. He, of course, had known from the first, through letters from Rawlins and through the western press, that a serious doubt had been cast upon Grant's sobriety,[1] but he also knew that, with Rawlins' support, the modest general had in no serious degree lapsed from that propriety of con-

[1] Wilson's "Life of Charles A. Dana," p. 309 *et seq.*

duct necessary for his success. He knew from Dana, Rawlins, and myself the real facts of his case, and that in no instance had he yielded to such an extent as to imperil the safety of his army or the success of his campaigns. But above all Washburne knew that, so long as Rawlins stood by him as guide, philosopher, and friend, the combination would continue to be successful. Therefore, while providing for Grant's promotion, he provided also for Rawlins' further advancement by getting Congress to create the office of chief-of-staff for him. Thus the union between them was perpetuated. Nearly every writer of the times has alluded to these circumstances, but no one has gone to the extent of declaring, as was indubitably the case, that the whole question of Grant's advancement was decided in his favor after a careful but informal consideration of the facts and probabilities affecting his personal habits and character. I know whereof I write, and that I am not mistaken, because every official in Washington who consulted me at all asked questions which left no doubt in my mind as to the ground of their solicitude. I know of no other case like this in history. It stands alone, and it was decided on the probabilities that, as Grant had been successful with the support of those nearest him, he would continue to be successful so long as they continued to stand by him. The sequel showed that confidence in him and them was not misplaced.

After reaching Washington I wrote to Rawlins, giving him the result of my observations and conferences from day to day, and making known through him to General Grant the progress of the measure for his advancement. It became more and

more evident as the days passed that Grant's friends were masters of the situation, and that he could reject his new rank should it not come with the clear understanding that he was to have untrammeled control of the army and the concurrence and support of the central government. Among those who knew best, the sentiment was that he should bring east with him only Rawlins, Smith, Bowers, and Badeau, of the old staff, and that he should take command of the Army of the Potomac, either directly or indirectly, as soon as spring operations should begin. It was to explain the situation at Washington and to give such details in regard to the various currents of feeling and opinion that had developed in reference to the measure under consideration that I visited Nashville, arriving there March 16, in the evening.

I found General Grant suffering from chills, but eager for all the news I could give him. I talked freely with him and with Rawlins, Bowers, and Badeau till midnight and afterwards with Bowers till daybreak. I found them all deeply impressed with the importance of the changes about to take place, and while they realized as fully as I did that their chief required "the courage of heroes, the purity of angels, and the omniscience of the gods," he would have to content himself with his natural endowments and the support of the friends who had stood with him from the first. From Grant down they were ready for the change and resolved to meet it with unfaltering hearts. There was not the slightest show of doubt in any of them that Grant would succeed.

It is well known that Sherman, of all his gen-

erals, counseled him not to remain in Washington or to take command in the East, but to return to the Mississippi valley and finish up the great work there, on the theory that the rest of the country would follow the destiny of that extensive region. He evidently doubted Grant's capacity to stand alone or to meet the machinations against him which his new position would surely bring. But Rawlins and Bowers, who were closer to Grant than any others, showed no sign of sharing such doubts. They recognized from the first that the commission of lieutenant general and the command of all the loyal armies imposed upon Grant the inevitable duty of meeting Lee and his hitherto invincible army face to face, and of trying out the issue with them to the bitter end.

Having told my story and satisfied myself as to the feelings of Grant and his staff as well as to the military conditions prevailing at Nashville, I returned to Washington as rapidly as possible, where I made known to Washburne, Dana, and others the feelings I had found at Grant's headquarters.

As before intimated, I took but little interest in social matters during that winter in Washington. Shortly after arriving there, I had been invited to dine at the White House and to accompany the President and his family to the theater. It was a new experience for me, and one of mingled emotions. The President was kindness itself and seemed to know without explanations that I was the son of his old friend, Harrison Wilson, of the Black Hawk War. He told me many anecdotes and asked me a good many questions. Among the rest he wanted to know about the Generals, Crooke and Stoughton,

who had recently been captured in the Shenandoah Valley while visiting ladies outside their camp. It so happened that I knew both quite well, and was enabled to assure the President that they were good officers, and that such an accident might readily overtake any one in that region. It was upon this occasion that he said: "I don't care so much for brigadiers; I can make them. But horses and mules cost money."

Directly after the passage of the bill reviving the grade of lieutenant general, Grant came to Washington to confer with the President and receive his new commission. On this trip he was accompanied by Rawlins and Mrs. Grant, and on their arrival I called to pay my respects. I found the party well pleased with their reception, but unable or unwilling to accept social invitations from even those in highest authority. The Lieutenant General was necessarily busy informing himself as to the condition of affairs in Virginia. As I recall it, he and Mrs. Grant had been expected to dine at the White House, but, as the General was delayed in getting back to Washington from Fort Monroe, Mrs. Grant asked me to call and explain to Mrs. Lincoln that they would not be able to keep their engagement. Upon that occasion I was again invited to dine, and go to the theater, and, of course, the invitation was equivalent to a command.

After dinner we went to the theater and, while seated in the President's box, he told me between the acts a great many characteristic anecdotes, but made no allusion to public affairs. Now and then, for an instant, his countenance seemed "sicklied o'er with a pale cast of thought," like a peaceful

landscape shadowed by passing clouds, but on the whole he looked brighter and more cheerful than usual. He did not disguise the relief he felt at having at last found a leader for the army with the prestige and habit of success. This, more than anything else, lifted a great load from his mind, but, withal, it was evident that he was still wearied and weighed down by the cares of his great office and that he sought relief in the play before him. I was struck that night by the gravity of his countenance in contrast with the extraordinary mobility of his lips and tongue and the clear and rapid enunciation they gave to his words. Something in the play caused him to turn to me and imitate the low and plaintive "ba-a-a" of a lamb, which he did with singular accuracy and effect.

It was about that time, while walking out with Ward Lamon, the herculean marshal, that a Confederate sympathizer had stopped them, and, grasping the President's hand, wrung it till he cried out with pain. As it was not the first time that he had received such greetings under the guise of friendship, nor that Lamon had witnessed it, the latter, with the fist of a gladiator, delivered a blow straight in the ruffian's face and felled him to the ground. In sorrow for the poor devil, who hardly knew what had struck him, Lincoln gazed sadly upon his prostrate form and said: "For God's sake, Ward, give the man a chance! The next time you hit him, hit him with an axe handle!"

I saw the President several times after that night, but the injunction to "give the man a chance," followed by an unconscious light on his countenance, not only brought this anecdote to my

mind, but recalled the familiar scene at the frontier town where the storekeeper habitually kept behind the door a hickory axe handle ready on a moment's notice as the last argument with the ruffian who had drunk too much and could not be got rid of without a breach of the peace.

The contrast between Lincoln's life at New Salem on the Sangamon River, where he cleaned out the Clary's grove gang in a bout at fisticuffs, and his life in Washington, where he was struggling as Chief Magistrate of the nation to overthrow the greatest rebellion of modern times, well illustrates the opposite ends of our civilization and presents as strange a chapter as can be found in the annals of the human race.

I attended but one reception at the White House. Mr. Lincoln, accompanied by his wife, took position in what was then known as the Red Room, with a few invited guests behind, and, as the procession passed two by two, he listlessly grasped their extended hands and passed them on without a word. Occasionally a man and his wife more distinguished than the rest would be pulled over by an attendant to join the guests behind the President. I and my friends had this honor, and we found a few acquaintances who were enjoying it with us. But the whole meeting seemed pervaded by a sense of duty mingled with curiosity rather than by a spirit of enjoyment. The President's gloves were far too large, and this was doubtless a matter of choice to enable him to get them on and off easily and to discourage the hearty handshake that was so prevalent both with the friends and the enemies of that illustrious man.

I also attended a ball at a private banker's, then one of the leaders of fashion in the Federal city. It was a brilliant affair. The music was beautiful and the ladies charmingly dressed, according to the fashion of the day, but the pleasure of the occasion was marred for me in a most unexpected manner. The party I accompanied was composed of a field officer of engineers, his wife, and two young ladies, and I was authorized to bring with me a captain who was convalescing from a painful wound. Before the dancing began our party divided into couples and within a few minutes after we began circulating I observed a commotion in the larger reception room. Pushing my way through the excited guests I found my friend, the captain, extended on three chairs in a faint, gasping for breath and suffering from the heat. Making my way to his side, and seeing that he was in a state of collapse, it occurred to me that he might be revived by a glass of punch, which I made haste to take from the punch bowl near at hand. He swallowed it with unexpected avidity and then, with a languid upward look, said: "More," whereupon I gave him another, which he received in the same manner and swallowed with a similar result. Again he called for more. Thinking that his position was not suitable for further refreshment of that sort, assisted by a couple of the gentlemen, I carried him out to a back piazza, where we found a swinging hammock. Lifting him in it, I began further investigation. Several bystanders pressed in to assist, but, thinking my friend was suffering from nothing worse than heat and possibly his wound, I pushed them aside, remarking to one who asked if I were a medical

man: "No, but I think I can handle this case." But the harder I strove to restore my friend the less I succeeded in doing so. One of the gentlemen thereupon asked if I knew who the elderly person was I had pushed aside. When I said I had never seen him before, the gentleman replied: "That was Doctor Blank, the most distinguished medical practitioner of this city." Realizing at once that I had made a mistake, I sought and found the Doctor enjoying himself as though nothing had happened. I made a humble apology, confessing that the case appeared to be too complicated for anyone except a doctor, and begging him to come again to my friend's assistance. This he did in the most amiable manner, and, after feeling his pulse, lifting his eyelid, auscultating his chest and applying all the other proper tests, I noted a gentle smile about the corners of his mouth, immediately after which he looked up and said: "You should put your friend to bed. He will be better to-morrow. He is simply drunk." Whereupon, in astonishment, I remarked that it could not be possible. The Doctor at once rejoined: "Oh, yes, General, drunk; very drunk, indeed." And this ended the discussion, and closed the incident.

While I remained in Washington one most important matter affecting the public welfare was sifted to the bottom. A correspondent who had opportunities through his association with statesmen and newspaper men to know what was going on in the East had written me early in 1863 that great discontentment prevailed in regard to the Government and the failure of its efforts to suppress the rebellion. This discontentment showed itself in sev-

eral ways. A group of congressmen, fully convinced that Lincoln and his cabinet were unequal to the task before them, concocted a scheme, with various ramifications, to elect a stronger man for President, and this scheme was still on. The same group, with allies among the governors, were strongly prejudiced against Stanton and threatened to withhold their support from the Government unless he were expelled from the War Department and Halleck relieved as general-in-chief. But our late successes in the West had greatly discouraged this combination. Another group of which a political major general was the center felt that a different and far more drastic remedy should be resorted to. It was believed by many that this group was plotting the overthrow of the Government and the establishment of a dictatorship of which the major general should be either the head or the Secretary of War, and that the first business would be to lead the army to Washington and turn the President and his cabinet out of office. With this done, affairs were to be carried on by the dictator, and the war was to be thereafter conducted in a more scientific and vigorous manner. But again military success in the West also put this scheme to confusion and instead of usurpation and a dictatorship of the vulgar sort, substantially the same end was to be accomplished by the act of Congress creating the grade of lieutenant general and the assignment of Grant to that rank, with the understanding that he was to have full powers, subject only to the supreme command of the President and the constituted authorities. The underlying idea of this legislation was undoubtedly to give the new and successful commander com-

plete control and at the same time, without saying so directly, to restrict the functions and activities of the President and the Secretary of War to supplying men, money, and material for carrying on the struggle, while the actual work in the field should be supervised by the new general-in-chief, and all subordinate army commanders should take their orders and carry on their operations solely under his direction.

Notwithstanding the particulars, which reached me from time to time, both while in Washington and before I went there, I always felt that the conspiracies to which I have alluded were more or less fictitious, but I am now persuaded that for a while at least they were promoted by various elements of discontent in and out of Congress, as well as in and out of the army. Fortunately, the lieutenant generalcy was not only a constitutional but an eminently practical solution of the country's more pressing difficulties. Knowing the modesty, patriotism, and unquestioning sense of subordination which controlled Grant in all his actions, and feeling assured that the men and influences surrounding him would be managed if not dominated hereafter as heretofore by his strong, aggressive, and patriotic chief-of-staff, I had no sort of doubt that the entire army would be confined henceforth to the duty of sustaining the civil government in all its branches, while it would be called upon to put forth at the same time its best efforts to overthrow and suppress the slaveholders' rebellion. The country accepted this plan as a happy solution of its most pressing difficulties, and for the immediate future gave but little heed to illegal and quixotic schemes

for getting control of the Government. This view of the matter was loyally accepted by the leading newspapers as well as by the leading congressmen and governors, and the new era began with an immediate restoration of hope and confidence in which I fully shared. While the new plans necessarily developed themselves but slowly, the measures, as they became known, relieved my mind of all apprehension, and when the hour came to give up my office in Washington and to rejoin Grant in the field I went most willingly and with every confidence that both the civil and military crises had been successfully passed and that the Government provided for in the Constitution would surely and within a reasonable time triumph over all its enemies and opposers whomsoever.

XIV

COMMANDING THIRD CAVALRY DIVISION

General plan of campaign—Report to Meade—Relieve Kilpatrick—Confirmation delayed—Spencer carbines—Position of opposing armies.

The Lieutenant General's plan for the spring campaign was not only most resolute, but as simple and direct as it was wise. Lee's army was the objective of the Army of the Potomac. Major General George G. Meade was in immediate command, reënforced by the Ninth Corps under Burnside, all under the personal supervision of General Grant. "Wherever Lee goes there you will go also," summarized his terse instructions to Meade. As aid to this aggressive forward movement against the main army of the Confederacy under command of its greatest general, Grant had also the Army of the James, twenty-three thousand men, under Major General Benjamin F. Butler, composed of Butler's own troops and those of Major General Quincy A. Gillmore, from the south Atlantic coast. This army, under the immediate command of Major General William Farrar Smith, was ordered to operate on the south side of the James, with Richmond for its objective. The armies of Meade and Butler were to become a unit in the event of the success of the

latter in forcing the enemy into the entrenchments of Richmond. Coöperative offensive action of all our armies in the field, east or west, as far as possible, was provided for and insisted upon. Especially important as an aid of the principal movements against Lee and Richmond, respectively, was the march against Lynchburg and the Tennessee and Virginia Railroad to be made by a column of ten thousand or twelve thousand men moving out from Beverly under Major General E. O. C. Ord, and another column, principally cavalry, moving in concert from Charlestown, West Virginia, under Major General George Crook. It will be observed that Grant, as was characteristic and proper, reserved to himself much the hardest job. The campaign began early in May, 1864, and was pressed with varying fortunes not only through the spring but "all summer," and until the successful end, about one year later, at Appomattox. From various causes, chiefly Lee's generalship, which was foreseen, but largely from the inefficiency and lack of coöperation among his own subordinates, which, if foreseen, could not be adequately reckoned with in advance, Grant, in his initial eastern campaign, met with many cruel, almost heartbreaking, losses and disappointments. Men cast in a less sturdy mold would have yielded, and turned back in defeat as did all his predecessors. But to every reverse and failure he opposed an iron obstinacy and steadiness of purpose, ever resolutely and increasingly greater with the failures and obstacles to be overcome.[1]

My part in this epoch-making campaign, while

[1] O. R. Serial No. 60, pp. 758, 794, 798, 803, 827-9, 1017.

relatively unimportant, was, nevertheless, shaped in accordance with the immediate personal wishes and direction of General Grant. On the 28th of March, 1864, shortly after he took the field, he wrote Halleck from Culpeper Court House, Virginia, saying, among other things:

I think General Wilson should be relieved from duty in the Cavalry Bureau as soon as it is possible to find an officer to succeed him. I cannot suggest an officer to take his place.[1]

On April 6 he telegraphed Halleck:

Is General Wilson to come here? If he can be spared from the Cavalry Bureau, he is much wanted to command a cavalry division. I would like to know the decision of the Secretary of War in this matter as soon as possible, so that the cavalry command can be arranged.[2]

To which Halleck replied next day:

General Wilson has been relieved and directed to report to the Lieutenant General for assignment to duty.[3]

It is also an interesting and strange coincidence in my fairly eventful career that while the fall before, about the time Grant was urging my promotion to brigadier general to command cavalry, and Rosecrans was asking my detail to command an engineer regiment, Major General Butler, commanding the Department of Virginia and North Carolina, without my knowledge or concurrence wired General Grant:

Don't think me importunate, but for the good of the service can you not send me Brigadier General J. H.

[1] O. R. Serial No. 60, p. 753.
[2] *Ib.*, p. 809.
[3] *Ib.*, pp. 815-816.

Wilson, now of the Cavalry Bureau, as chief of cavalry, to lead our expedition?[1]

The next day General Grant ordered me to report without delay to Major General Meade, commanding the Army of the Potomac, for duty, and on the same day General Butler renewed, without result, his preference for me to command his cavalry.[2] Having in no way sought to influence either Grant or Butler, I assume that the latter, with whom I had but slight personal acquaintance, was inspired by my friend, Major General W. F. Smith, to single me out and request my assignment to service as above. It was a curious episode in my life, and, looking back upon it after a half century, it is perhaps not immodest in me to say that what Smith, notwithstanding his conceded great ability and General Grant's confidence in him, found himself under the Butler handicap utterly unable to do, we, together, working as at Chattanooga, as one man might possibly have done. We should have had my old friend, Gillmore's, loyal help and coöperation, and, putting my more youthful energy and enthusiam into the scale, along with the wisdom and veteran experience of two such capable soldiers as Smith and Gillmore, it is conceivable and at least possible, if not probable, that we three might have overcome not only Butler's utter lack of military skill, but the resistance of the enemy as well, and so have realized General Grant's hope early in the campaign, that the enemy, as the result of the operations on the James and those under his immediate personal direction, might be forced into the in-

[1] O. R. Serial No. 60, pp. 850, 851, Butler to Grant, April 12.

[2] *Ib.*, p. 862, Butler to Grant, April 13, 1864.

trenchments of Richmond, where assuredly Grant might have repeated his success of Vicksburg.

It is impossible to overestimate the importance of thorough personal touch, mutual confidence, and loyal coöperation between the leading officers of any army. This lack of it in the army of the James was most unfortunate in its personal consequences and in its influence upon the success of the campaign. Initial success on the James and at Petersburg might have changed the whole course of history. But it was not to come at that time.

During my stay in Washington I kept in close touch with Grant's headquarters through personal correspondence with Rawlins, Smith, and Bowers, and an occasional letter to the General himself, and this custom continued, as opportunity permitted, to the end of the war. After Grant became lieutenant general and took the field in Virginia, my list of correspondents at his headquarters was enlarged to include Porter, Babcock, and Badeau, and it is from that correspondence, supplemented by my reports and diaries, that I have drawn largely for the dates and facts in this narrative.

It will be recalled that shortly after Grant came east he sent for Sheridan, who had greatly distinguished himself with his division of infantry at Missionary Ridge, and gave him command of the cavalry corps of the Army of the Potomac. In turn, as soon as it could be arranged, he relieved Kilpatrick, at his own request, from further duty with the corps and sent him west, while he transferred Merritt, Custer, and Davies to other brigades so as to make way for my formal assignment to the command of the Third Division. Although Merritt was

below me in class standing and Kilpatrick and Custer came out a year later, while Davies was from the Volunteers, each of them got his general's star a few months before I did. In short, they outranked me as brigadiers, and this made the changes noted above necessary in order to give me command of a division. As my services had been confined so far to the staff and to the War Department, my assignment to the command of a division, under the circumstances, gave particular offense to my seniors of the line and led to hard feelings and complications which were not without influence in the cavalry operations and which did not entirely disappear till I was relieved from duty with the Army of the Potomac and sent west to reorganize and command the cavalry of Sherman's armies.[1] It was assumed, perhaps naturally enough, by those concerned that I had overslaughed them through personal influence and solicitation, but nothing could have been further from the fact. In that matter, at least, the Lieutenant General acted entirely on his own judgment, without consulting me in any way whatever, and, without reference to the precise reasons for the selection, he is entitled to all the praise and equally to all the blame for my assignment as well as for Sheridan's.

But a further word of explanation may be interesting. It will be remembered that the cavalry of the Army of the Potomac was at that time resting under some discredit. Although it had been organized by Stoneman, a distinguished cavalryman of the old army, and was afterwards commanded by Pleasanton, also an officer of good reputation,

[1] O. R. Serial No. 60, pp. 753, 809, 862, 872, 881, 893.

it had as yet achieved no marked superiority over the Confederate cavalry. Both Stoneman and Pleasanton had met Stuart with varying fortunes. If anything, Stuart was regarded as having shown superior enterprise and ability both in action and in the raids he had conducted, so that when Sheridan took command it was generally understood that the prestige of the Confederate was greater than that of the National cavalry. This, it was conceived, made necessary and fully justified the importation of new blood and the assignment of new officers to command the cavalry corps and its First and Third Divisions. Torbert was brought over from the infantry with a reputation for courage, steadiness, and dash, and, without dwelling on details, the results achieved, although not marked by unbroken success, may be considered as having justified the changes.

In behalf of both Stoneman and Pleasanton it may be fairly claimed that their failure was due rather to the way in which the cavalry was scattered and overworked by those from whom they took their orders than from any shortcomings of their own. It is equally true that the disasters which occurred and the mistakes which were made by Sheridan were due generally to the same causes, and particularly to the manner in which the cavalry corps was upon certain important occasions broken into detachments and sent on eccentric movements by General Grant. All this will appear more fully in the course of this narrative.

Meanwhile it is interesting to note that William Farrar Smith, Sheridan, and I were the only general officers Grant brought from the West to com-

mand troops who had ever been with him in battle or knew anything from personal observation as to his methods of conducting warfare. Smith had been with him a few weeks at Chattanooga; Sheridan had served under his eyes at Corinth and at Missionary Ridge, while Burnside had commanded in east Tennessee. Ord, who joined later, had served in the Vicksburg Campaign. I had been on his staff during the period of his greatest glory, from the beginning of the campaign in northern Mississippi to the end of the campaign at Chattanooga. It seems but natural, therefore, that he should want a few officers whom he knew personally, and in whom he had confidence, both in the Army of the Potomac and in the Army of the James.

Before leaving this subject, it may be well to state that in General David McM. Gregg, who commanded the Second Division, the cavalry had one of its very best officers. He had always belonged to that branch of the service, and was noted for sterling ability and great experience. Steady as a clock and as gallant as Murat, it has been often said that he was the best all-'round cavalry officer that ever commanded a division in either army. Somewhat lacking in enthusiasm and possibly in aggressive temper, he was a man of unusual modesty, but of far more than usual capacity. He had done splendid service wherever called upon and especially in the command of the cavalry at Gettysburg, but for some reason not easy to define he had not impressed himself sufficiently upon his immediate commanders to secure the position which was given to Sheridan. He outranked Torbert, Merritt, Custer, and Wilson, and, whenever they came together, necessarily had

command over them. While he always acquitted himself with marked ability and credit, it must always remain a question whether he would have done as well as Sheridan in command of the cavalry corps. He did not serve through to the end of the war, but after participating in all the cavalry engagements in the campaign against Lee he resigned his commission and left the service early in February, 1865. Whether this was due to pique or to disappointment, he was always too proud to explain. But whatever may have been the real cause it is due him to add that it cost the army in its closing campaign the services of a most gallant and useful officer, whose superb figure, knightly bearing, and perfect self-possession won the admiration of his companions in arms and secured for him the reputation of a soldier *"sans peur et sans reproche."*

On my way to the front I stopped over at Culpeper Court House to pay my respects to Generals Grant, Meade, and Sheridan, and had a flattering reception from all. After receiving my assignment to command the Third Cavalry Division, I spent a few hours with Grant's staff. While there I received the gratifying information from Rawlins, confirmed before I left by Mrs. Grant, who was spending a few days with the General, that he had reserved a place for me on the staff with the rank of lieutenant colonel to provide for the contingency of my nonconfirmation by the Senate as brigadier general. Up to that date, although we had been appointed the year before, that august body had withheld its consent and approval to the advancement of both Rawlins and myself. As we were staff officers neither of whom had yet commanded troops, our

friends, notwithstanding the tremendous influence of the lieutenant general, had what afterwards came to be recognized as a well-grounded doubt as to our confirmation. Congress in the exercise of its discretion had with doubtful wisdom limited the number of general officers that could be appointed by the President, and the Senate had still further curtailed his authority by closely scrutinizing the services and merits of those whose names were sent before it for its consent and approval. But up to that time neither of us gave much thought to the disposition of that body toward us. Both, I may truthfully say, were much more interested in the work we might have to do than in the rank or the pay we might get for it, and yet it was most gratifying to know that the man mainly responsible for our promotion amid the sea of cares which surrounded him had not forgotten to provide suitable place and rank for our future services.

It turned out, however, that both our names were hung up in the Senate somewhat indefinitely, and while both finally received favorable consideration mine was lost between the Military Committee room and the engrossing clerk's office after official notice of confirmation had been sent by Stanton to Grant, and by Grant to me. Fortunately, through Grant's intercession, my name was sent again without delay to the Senate for confirmation to take effect from the date of my original appointment. In due course it was again favorably acted upon and this fact was finally certified by the issuance of the proper commission.

I had naturally assumed that my name was lost in the first instance through the procurement of the

defaulting horse contractors whom I had caused to be arrested and imprisoned, and who had promptly sworn vengeance against me. But as I was leaving for the West six months later, under a new assignment, I was pained and surprised to receive a voluntary statement from an officer concerned that he and another, whom I had superseded, had in anger and resentment induced the Senate Committee's clerk to drop my name in the shuffle and confusion, which always more or less certainly occur at the end of the session. The officer in question showed every evidence of shame at the part he had taken "to get even with me," as he expressed it, and volunteered to go West and serve under me to show that he was not only not inspired by malevolence but was anxious to do all in his power to make full reparation for the wrong he would have done me. While this manly, but surprising, speech explained and made clear other incidents of the past six months, it fortunately enabled me to assure him that I had used no influence whatever to secure my preferment, and that as I had received no permanent injury at his hands I had nothing to forgive. I need not add that we parted better friends than we had ever been and that, as he was withal a gallant officer in whose good faith I had no sort of doubt, I shortly afterwards made official application that he, with several others, might be sent to assist in the great work I had been detailed to undertake. Although this request was not granted, and we were never thrown together again, we remained good friends to the end of his brilliant career.

On Sunday, April 17, 1864, I rode from Culpeper Court House to Stevensburg, in front of

which the Third Cavalry Division held position, and immediately assumed command. Before leaving Grant's headquarters, the General showed me the telegram from General Butler already quoted, requesting that I be assigned to command the cavalry attached to the Army of the James. This was quite a surprise, for, although I had met General Butler while serving as an engineer officer at Port Royal as he was on his way to New Orleans, I had, as before stated, but little acquaintance with him and none from which he could have known anything of my capacity to command cavalry. I was much flattered by his request, but always attributed it to the suggestion of General Smith or of Colonel Turner, both regular officers, with whom I was intimate, rather than to the personal favor of the department commander.

Kilpatrick was naturally chagrined at the order relieving him from command of the Third Division, and had already taken his departure for the West.[1] I had known him well at West Point. Although nearly two years my senior, he was a member of the class next after mine and had served in the cadet company of which I was first sergeant, both as a private and as a corporal, and while I can scarcely claim to have been a mother to him, as is the duty of a first sergeant, I had taken a friendly interest in him and had come to regard him highly as an officer of energy, ability, and patriotism. He early began the war for the Union and he was just as enthusiastic and outspoken for it as was the hottest-headed fire-eater in favor of the South and its peculiar institution. He was a brilliant orator, and

[1] O. R. Serial No. 60, p. 862.

while on furlough had taken an active part in the political meetings of his native state. During his cadet days he distinguished himself as an amateur actor in the plays given by the Dialectic Society. Somewhat below medium size, with sandy, reddish hair and a fiery temper, he was distinctly unpopular with the Southerners, whose growing aggressiveness and intolerance he was prompt to resent. This naturally led to a number of personal squabbles and encounters, but no matter how big his antagonist Kilpatrick always bore himself with unflinching courage. Although married the day he graduated, he was at once assigned as a second lieutenant to the Regular Artillery. As he was one of the first graduates of West Point to perceive that the war for the Union would be fought mainly by volunteers, he at once resolved to cast his lot in with them. Within a week he was elected a captain in the Fifth New York Infantry, known as Duryea's Zouaves. Shortly afterwards he took a conspicuous part in the battle of Big Bethel, and although severely wounded he refused to leave the field till overcome by the loss of blood. He was the first regular officer wounded during the war of the Rebellion, and to find himself loudly praised in the newspapers, which was doubtless the reason for his election as lieutenant colonel of the Second New York Cavalry as well as for his detail as inspector general on McDowell's staff. Too energetic to remain long on detached duty, however honorable, he sought permission at the beginning of active operations to rejoin his regiment, and for the next two years his life was one of incessant activity. He became colonel of his regiment before the end of the second year

and took a tireless and gallant part in all the raids, battles, and skirmishes connected with the campaigns in Virginia and Pennsylvania. He was the first of the younger West Pointers to win the star of a brigadier general, and to succeed in turn to the command of a brigade and a division. During his entire service, it is safe to say that no other officer could have been personally present at more engagements or have been more frequently in danger of sudden death than was the ubiquitous and fearless Kilpatrick. At the battle of Gettysburg he made a gallant but unsuccessful charge against the right wing of Lee's army, and for the next two weeks was daily in pursuit and conflict with the enemy. Neither fall nor winter put an end to his activities. In the early spring of 1864 he conducted a daring but unsuccessful raid against Richmond, in which Ulric Dahlgren, the gallant son of Admiral Dahlgren, lost his life, and many officers and men were wounded and taken prisoner. It cannot be said that Kilpatrick was always successful, but no man ever charged him with being a laggard in campaign or battle, or that he did not bear himself always with conspicuous gallantry. Full of enthusiasm and romance, he naturally loved streamers, guidons, and banners, and rejoiced in the bugles, the racket, rattle, and fanfaronade of the cavalry service. No enterprise was too dangerous to appall him, no odds too great to deter him from the charge, and, like his far abler and far steadier classmate, the incomparable Upton, there was no position in the army to which he did not aspire. His ambition was simply boundless, and from his intimates he did not disguise his faith that, if he

got through the war alive, he would become governor of New Jersey, and ultimately president of the United States. Withal, his habits were unexceptionable. While he was as gay and boastful as the traditional cavalier, he neither drank nor gambled, and the severest thing ever said of him, excepting the rough, half-jocular criticism by Sherman, to be mentioned later, was that he should have been known as "Kil-Cavalry," rather than as Kilpatrick. That he did not take proper care of his men and horses was generally alleged, but the sufficient answer is that neither he nor any one in his place could do so under the system prevailing in the army at any time up to the end. No civilian can realize how impossible it was, till Grant became generalissimo, for the cavalry leaders to manage their arm of service with the conservatism and prudence necessary to build up and maintain its efficiency and yet give it on the march and in battle that coherence and dash without which it could not hope to succeed.

While it may be truthfully inferred that I had nothing to do with Kilpatrick's transfer to the West, it is proper to add that I was destined, when detailed to reorganize and command the Western cavalry, to supersede him again. On joining Sherman later in that year at Gaylesville I found Kilpatrick commanding the Third Cavalry Division of the Army of the Tennessee, which in the reorganization became the Third Division of the Cavalry Corps of the Military Division of the Mississippi. He had taken an active part in the Atlanta campaign and, although from no fault of his own the cavalry operations were sadly lacking coherence, it is certain that he had, in the main, won Sherman's

personal confidence and regard. In conference at the camp fire that night about plans and organization, the General selected Kilpatrick's division and directed me to fit it out thoroughly for the march to the sea, adding at once in language more graphic than just or considerate: "I know that Kilpatrick is a hell of a damned fool, but I want just that sort of a man to command my cavalry on this expedition." This was as breezy and still more unfair than what he had just written to Grant: "Kilpatrick is well enough for small scouts, but I do want a man of sense and courage to manage my cavalry, and will take any one that you have tried."[1] And this accounts for the fact that Kilpatrick was with Sherman to the last day of the war, but, proof against fatigue himself, he worked his division as usual beyond its capacity, and took but little care of his horses, which all good cavalrymen know are the principal factor in the efficiency of the mounted service. From first to last Kilpatrick was as brave, enterprising, and energetic as any officer on either side of the Great Conflict. In later years it became my willing task to prepare the sketch of his life and services for Cullum's Biographical Register of the officers and graduates of the Military Academy.[2]

With the incessant activity imposed upon Kilpatrick, in season and out of season, it was but natural that he should leave his division in the Army of the Potomac badly run down. Its camps were badly placed and badly policed; its horses were overworked and exhausted; its equipment and cloth-

[1] O. R. Serial No. 78, p. 442.

[2] "Cullum's Register," Vol. II, p. 784. Also "Biographical Sketch," by J. H. Wilson, p. 786 *et seq.*

ing nearly used up, and its heterogeneous collection of carbines dirty and out of order.[1] To make matters worse, the division staff was scattered, part going with Kilpatrick and part remaining behind. When I took command I found but seven regiments, the Second, Fifth, and Eighth New York; the Eighteenth Pennsylvania, the Third New Jersey, and the First Connecticut, together with one troop of the Third Indiana, and one of the Second Ohio, in all three thousand four hundred and thirty-six men for duty. Of these, only two thousand six hundred and ninety-two were mounted, while seven hundred and forty-four were entirely dismounted and three hundred and seventy-eight were furnished with worn-out or disabled horses which had been condemned as unserviceable. From this it will be seen that one thousand one hundred and twenty-two remounts were needed to enable the division to take the field. The greater part of its available force was stretched in an unbroken picket line covering the army's left wing and in sight of it, for twenty-eight miles, so that the next afternoon only six hundred and fifteen men were turned out for drill. At the first morning inspection I found but few officers attending stable call, while all routine duties were so poorly performed that I felt obliged to put one colonel in arrest and to admonish the rest that radical improvements must be made at once if they would save themselves from a similar fate. The actual conditions could not have been more discouraging. It was evident that a hard job had fallen to my lot and that I should be compelled to put forth the most vigorous efforts to procure the necessary remounts,

[1] O. R. Serial No. 60, p. 891-2.

equipment, clothing, and improved arms in time to take an efficient part in the campaign about to begin. Fortunately, while chief of the Cavalry Bureau, I had induced the chief of Ordnance to contract for all the Spencer magazine carbines that could be turned out, and, as this was the best repeating firearm so far invented, I at once made requisition for five thousand, or enough to supply the entire division, but it was three months before the contractors could deliver them. Meanwhile, the regiment did the best it could with Burnside, Smith, Sharp, and Colt carbines, supplemented by sabers and revolvers. Under the prevailing conditions it was uphill work to establish regular discipline and repair the deficiencies of equipment and outfit, but the officers and men were excellent in quality and character, and gave most cheerful assistance in the work to be done. I had hardly got acquainted with its extent and character when I was summoned to Washington as a witness before a general court-martial. Fortunately, General Grant was called there the same day, and as we traveled on together I acquainted him with the actual condition of affairs. He was sympathetic and gave me assurance of both personal and official support in such measures as I might find necessary to get my division ready for service.

I was absent five days, but before leaving the front I had started the work, and during my absence was able to hurry forward remounts and new equipment. The next two weeks constituted a period of incessant activity, not only on my own part, but on the part of my quartermaster and ordnance officer. Through Sheridan's intercession the cavalry

picket line was reduced to a few points of observation, and the greater part of the mounted troops returned to camp, where they at once engaged in drilling and refitting for an active campaign.[1] Dana, the assistant secretary of war, spent several days with us, and became personally acquainted with the condition of the army, and especially of the cavalry. Through his aid much was done to repair the waste of the previous campaigns. Drills were instituted, reviews were held, inspections were made, instruction given, and a system of daily administration was instituted, so that by the first of May a visitor to the army would have been impressed by the apparent readiness of the cavalry, as well as of the infantry, for the onward movement. During the early stages of the campaign the First Vermont, one of the best cavalry regiments in the army, returned to the division, and the Twenty-second New York, a new cavalry regiment, was assigned to it, mainly, I always supposed, because it was so green that no one else wanted it. The last few days in camp were taken up with final arrangements, with visits to Sheridan and Grant and with return visits from Grant's staff officers. It was a time of intense activity to all. Grant was on trial with a new army in a new theater of operations, and yet he was actual generalissimo of all the Union forces, subject only to the President as commander-in-chief.

The Army of the Potomac and the Confederate army of North Virginia had been facing each other without any decisive engagement since the battle of Gettysburg, July 1, 2, and 3, the year before. Grant's headquarters were at Culpeper Court

[1] O. R. Serial No. 60, p. 909, Sheridan to Meade, Apr. 19, 1864.

House, sometimes known as Fairfax, in Piedmont, Virginia, with the Blue Ridge in sight, sixty-five miles south-southwest from Washington. Lee's were at Orange Court House, also in sight of the Blue Ridge, about twenty miles farther on by the same railroad, and about seventy miles by its connections, northwest from Richmond. The distance between them was unequally divided by the Rapidan, with outposts of both on that stream.

Grant held the country between the Rapidan, the Blue Ridge, and Washington, and drew his supplies at first by rail, afterwards, as he moved forward, by rail and water. Lee, with two corps at Orange and east of Orange and one at Gordonsville and to the south, covered the junction of the railroads to Lynchburg and Richmond, and drew supplies from the country tributary to both places. The entire region south of him, with the exception of the sea coast, the larger bays, and the estuaries, was under his control. Grant's strength was about one hundred and fifteen thousand; Lee's about eighty-five thousand men for duty. The conditions, as they then existed, put upon Grant the necessity of assuming the offensive, while they imperatively required Lee to stand on the defensive.

From this statement it is evident that the first battle must be fought south of the Rapidan, and as an advance by the left flank would necessarily shorten Grant's line of supply and make his movements safer, he wisely concluded to open the campaign by moving in that direction. As Lee's main body occupied the region eastward from Orange Court House to Mine Run, a small stream flowing north into the Rapidan, which had stayed Meade's

march in the unfortunate mud campaign of the late winter, it was apparent that, while the Union army's advance must be generally southeast, its flank would be exposed to a counter movement from Lee nearly at right angles to the roads it must follow.

The distance from the center of Grant's army to Spottsylvania Court House was from twenty-five to thirty miles by the several country roads, while the distance from the center of Lee's line east of Orange to the same points was on the average about five miles less. As much of the region, soon to become the scene of a series of the bloodiest battles of modern times, was covered by forest trees and tangled underbrush which appropriately gave it the name of the Wilderness, the advantages were about equally divided. As Grant knew exactly when his columns would begin to move, and Lee could not be certain about either their direction or weight, and must gather these essential facts from the report of his outposts and spies, it may be fairly assumed that, with proper secrecy and celerity, Grant's columns could have passed through the Wilderness and reached the open country beyond before Lee could reach or confront them. When it is considered that about half the distance to be traversed was on the north side of the Rapidan, where the initial movements could be made under cover of darkness beyond the observations of the enemy, it will be seen that the advantages of a surprise might have been realized had the details been carefully worked out beforehand and the invading columns pushed forward with the utmost confidence and celerity.[1]

[1] By far the best Confederate accounts of this campaign are Longstreet's "From Manassas to Appomattox" and Alexander's "Military Memoirs of a Confederate."

XV

GRANT'S OVERLAND CAMPAIGN

First to cross the Rapidan—Craig's Meeting House—Catharpen Road—Todd's Tavern—Chancellorsville—Sedgwick's flank turned—Grant's behavior—Occupation of Spottsylvania Court House—Meade, Warren, and Sedgwick—Incident with Warren—Meeting with Grant—Defective organization of army.

Grant having completed his plans for a general and simultaneous advance, it was the duty of his subordinates to perform the part assigned them to the best of their ability. The details of the preliminary movements were worked out by Meade and his officers. This done, a calm, full of anxiety, fell upon Grant's staff, and, realizing that the responsibility was now on other shoulders, Rawlins, Porter, Babcock, and Badeau rode over to my headquarters on the evening the advance began. Knowing that I would have the lead, they came to wish me success and Godspeed. We passed a pleasant hour, exchanging confidences and good cheer, and then, with a hearty hand-shake all round, parted to meet again on the field of strife a few days later.

My division was as nearly ready as volunteer cavalry ever is, and as it had the extreme left and front at Stevensburg, five miles from Culpeper and

eight miles from Germanna ford, it naturally opened the campaign. Calling in my detachments after dark, I took the road about nine o'clock, and just before midnight, May 3, reached the north bank of the Rapidan, where arrangements had already been made to lay a pontoon bridge. A few minutes after midnight, on the morning of May 4, the dismounted men of Chapman's advance forded the river and, driving back the enemy's pickets, opened the way for the division, which was in turn followed closely by the Fifth Corps. By 5 A. M. I pushed out on the direct road to Old Wilderness Tavern, where I halted and sent out strong detachments to patrol the roads to the west and south of that place.

As soon as the infantry made its appearance we pushed on five miles further to Parker's Store on the Orange plank-road, where we bivouacked for the night, while Colonel Hammond with his splendid regiment, the Fifth New York Cavalry, well out toward New Hope Church and Mine Run, guarded the roads from Lee's right against surprise. As it afterward became known, Lee with his main body was advancing from that quarter and our advance guards that night halted within two miles of each other. But we met nothing during the day except the rebel pickets, all of whom fled to the westward upon our approach.

Passing into the Wilderness, we expected that the infantry would relieve our detachments on the various roads and throw out their own in turn, to cover and protect their flanks from the enemy, and this expectation was fully realized. Although my headquarters were within four or five miles of the

enemy's, we passed the entire night in perfect quietude, and the next morning at five o'clock I moved forward with the division well in hand to Craig's Meeting House, near Danielsville, on the Catharpen Road, leaving Colonel Hammond with the Fifth New York to hold the position at Parker's Store till relieved by Warren's leading division. An hour or more after I had gone forward the enemy under Lee's personal command made his appearance from the direction of Mine Run, and a sharp fight ensued, lasting six hours. Hammond, soon joined by McIntosh, his brigade commander, sent word at once to Crawford's division, the nearest infantry, that the enemy were pressing heavily upon him, and, if the position was to be held, help should be sent at once, but help never came. McIntosh and Hammond, with about five hundred men, armed with Spencer carbines, fighting behind trees on foot, in extended order, made the enemy think that he had encountered Grant's infantry, but the dismounted horsemen were finally outflanked, overweighted, and pressed back upon Crawford, a mile and a half to the right and rear. This was the opening fight of the campaign and gave ample notice of the Confederate advance in force. The next began about the same time by the main body of the division under my personal command on the Catharpen Road, near Craig's Meeting House, or Danielsville, about seven miles southwest of Parker's Store, and fully eight and a half miles from the nearest infantry.

I reached that point at eight o'clock without opposition, but shortly afterward the enemy's cavalry, led by the dashing Rosser, a Texan, who had been four years a cadet with me, supported by Hampton

with the other two brigades of his division, as well as by Stuart, with his second division—in all about eight thousand men, or double my force—attacked my advance guard with vigor. As this was my first engagement as a cavalry commander, I lost no time in personally leading my second brigade under the modest but intrepid Chapman, colonel of the Third Indiana Cavalry, to the attack. As was customary in those days, three-quarters of the men, or about one thousand three hundred in all, were dismounted and deployed in open order as skirmishers, while the other quarter held the horses under cover of the woods and the accidents of the ground in the rear. The action was on at once and, as both sides were anxious to gain the first advantage, it soon became furious. My two batteries of horse artillery, under Pennington and Fitzhugh, both young West Pointers of courage and experience, followed up the skirmishers closely, combing the ground to the front with a rapid and noisy fire of shrapnel and canister. Rosser's advance was promptly checked and driven back upon Lomax and Gordon's brigades of the same division, which were in turn thrown into confusion, and before they could reform had been driven about two miles. It was practically a head-on collision on a forest road in which both parties bore themselves gallantly, making all the noise they could. While the initial advantage was decidedly with us and while I pushed it as far as I could, I soon learned from prisoners and wounded in our hands that we were in the presence of Stuart's entire cavalry corps, supported probably by Longstreet's infantry, which had also begun its march from Gordonsville that morning. I gave orders to discontinue the pursuit,

rally and fall slowly back to a junction with my first brigade near the crossing of Robinson's Run on the road by which we had advanced. As Chapman's ammunition with so much fighting was running low and the reserve was some distance in rear, it was Chapman's duty to get back as rapidly as he could without running, though in accordance with the usage of cavalry, we might have done even that without discredit, had it been necessary or had we known, as we afterward learned, that we were outnumbered two or three to one.

I had fully accomplished the task assigned me and had sent courier after courier to the rear with written reports of what was going on in that quarter, but, unfortunately, not one of them got through without delay or a roundabout ride, owing to the fact that the enemy's infantry had forced McIntosh and Hammond from the crossroads at Parker's Store and thereby cut out direct communication with army headquarters.

Meanwhile Hampton and Rosser, with their supports, having got their breath, as soon as the pressure upon them eased up, came at us again with all their vigor. They were dashing fellows and their men promptly responded to their leadership. Fierce fighting was resumed. Our men, as they reached their horses, remounted, when charge and counter charge with saber and pistol followed in quick succession, each causing a halt in the action of the other. When Chapman's line, still deployed, but facing about whenever necessary, had passed beyond me, I found myself with a single troop of the Eighth Illinois Cavalry, under Lieutenant Long, covering the rear. Under a rattling fire from our

artillery sweeping the enemy's front with shrapnel and canister, Long and I led the little guard of Illinoisians headlong against the enemy's advance, scattering it in all directions. After pushing the charge as far as it could go I sounded the rally and slowly fell back by the road on which I had advanced. Although the enemy followed at a distance, we were not engaged again that day. We joined the first brigade where we had left it, covering the road to Parker's Store, but had hardly got there when, greatly to my disappointment, I learned that our couriers had not got through to Meade's headquarters. The road was barred by the enemy. I had had no word from Sheridan that day and knew absolutely nothing as to his whereabouts or even as to the position of any part of the army except my own. It was now late in the afternoon, and, fearing that my exposed position far in front might invite the enemy to concentrate heavily against me, I resolved to make my way to Todd's Tavern, five miles farther to the east, and either form a junction with Gregg at that place or rejoin the cavalry corps wherever it might be found.

Having reunited my command at Robinson's Run and discovered that the enemy's infantry were not only behind our right and rear in the direction of Parker's Store, but that his cavalry were moving by our left as if to get behind us, I made my way rapidly through the woods to the left, regained the Catharpen Road in advance of the enemy and continued along it to the Tavern, in front of which we found Gregg's division in line of battle. Fortunately, he had not yet seen the enemy and with his fresh men we not only easily checked Rosser and

Hampton, but made good our position for the night.

During the operations of the afternoon, however, while covering the rear with my own escort, I was several times in danger of being cut off in making a détour to rejoin the division farther back. In the last instance, while trotting along leisurely behind the troops, the rattle and racket going on back of us so alarmed my horse, the "Waif," a veteran of the Vicksburg and Chattanooga campaigns, that he suddenly seized his bit and dashed off at full speed till he found himself in the midst of our retiring skirmishers, when he yielded to the reins, and, with what might have been considered a sigh of relief, again settled down to an orderly gait. Shortly afterward I formed the junction with Gregg with no further loss except a few men and horses wounded. After a conference it became apparent that our new position was still nearly five miles in front of the infantry, and that it would be necessary to establish and maintain communication by the Brock Road, on which Gregg had advanced. To this end I sent Chapman's brigade, just before midnight, back a mile and a half, with orders to patrol and cover the country between us and the advance corps of the army. Fortunately, the enemy was not moving in the dark, so our jaded men and horses got a few hours of badly needed rest. We had been marching and fighting most of the time for two days and three nights, swinging entirely around from the extreme right to the farthest advanced post through field and forest in the midst of which the great battles of the Wilderness were fought. We had perfectly screened Grant's advance, engag-

ing the enemy wherever we encountered him and making good our hold on the important points of the field, but so far had received neither support nor new orders from the rear. Both men and horses were getting hungry, the country was equally bare of provisions and forage, and as we knew nothing yet of how it had fared with the infantry, our third night was necessarily one of intense anxiety.

Communication was finally opened with corps headquarters during the night, and early the next morning Sheridan sent me orders to make my way to Chancellorsville for ammunition and rations. Moving by wood-roads, which were everywhere obscure, several hours were consumed in finding our trains and renewing our supplies. The next morning, bright and early, we were ordered to take position further to our left and front, with one brigade at Piney Branch Church and the other at Aldrich's House, near the Fredericksburg and Spottsylvania road. As that was far beyond the reach of the enemy at that stage of the campaign, we had no further fighting and were withdrawn again after dark to Chancellorsville, where we bivouacked for the night.

I there learned for the first time that the whole of that day, May 6, had been one of desperate battle. While the cavalry operations had developed the enemy's movements and screened our own, they equally gave Lee, through his pickets, timely notice of Grant's advance from the Rapidan into the Wilderness. As we soon knew to our cost, the Confederate leader wasted no time in uncertainty, but sallied out with his entire army on the several parallel roads leading from his camps at and east of Orange

and Gordonsville toward Fredericksburg, crossing those nearly at right angles on which Grant was necessarily advancing.

Notwithstanding the successful operations of the cavalry, the infantry battle was soon joined on a grand scale in the tangled woods and underbrush of the Wilderness, every trail through which was familiar to the enemy and his guides, but the story has been told so many times that I shall not even recount the details of our own operations,[1] although nearly all historical accounts ignore or minimize the part played by the cavalry, but shall confine myself to certain incidents which, so far as I know, have not yet found a place in the annals of the times.

In the desperate efforts to resist our passage through the Wilderness, Lee was necessarily the assailant and threw himself with the frenzy of desperation against Grant's columns. But the Union army, with varying fortunes, due mostly to the unfavorable features of the battlefield, everywhere held its own except on the extreme right, where the enemy under Gordon after sundown made an unexpected advance, turning Sedgwick's right flank and capturing almost a division of his infantry, but failing, partly on account of darkness, which obscured the great advantage he had gained, and partly because his column lacked weight, his movement soon came to an end. Meanwhile, the imperturbable Sedgwick, by refusing that part of his line which remained intact, restored order, formed a new line, and made good his position for the night. The danger was soon past, but while it lasted it was an

[1] See my report, O. R. Serial No. 67, pp. 871-884.

episode of terrible import, followed by a night of anxiety which none of us will ever forget.[1]

About nine o'clock Forsyth, Sheridan's chief-of-staff, an intimate friend from our cadet days, came to my headquarters with the first news of the disaster which had befallen the Sixth Corps. My division was next to the scene of action and I was directed to hold it in instant readiness for any orders that might reach us. The situation was one of extraordinary gravity.[2] Sheridan had already been notified that the reserve trains had been ordered to the left and would thereafter be under his protection and base themselves on Fredericksburg. This movement he construed as foreshadowing an entire change of base and possibly a retreat to the north side of the Rappahannock. We both knew that the Army of the Potomac had executed such maneuvers before, and, above all, we knew that it had not hitherto fought its battles to a finish. In ignorance yet of what might follow from the enemy's turning movement early in the evening, we feared the worst. Forsyth, far from being a tyro or an alarmist, was a veteran of long service and hard knocks, who knew the signs and portents of war as well as any man living. My inflated India-rubber bed had already been spread upon the ground for the night, and after we had fully considered the situation with all the light we could get, and I had given my staff and brigade commanders such orders as were required by the occasion, I invited Forsyth to lie down with me. Of course, neither of us undressed, but our heads had

[1] O. R. Serial No. 67, pp. 2, 18, 190, 1028, 1071, 1077-8.
[2] O. R. Serial No. 68, pp. 2, 448.

scarcely touched the pillow when we caught the sound and tremor of a distant roar that seemed like the musketry of battle. We listened with bated breath, and, while we were not certain, we both concluded that if the fighting was still going on, it indicated a desperate condition of affairs, the end of which no one could foretell. We were between three and four miles from the center and fully five from the extreme right of our army, but were separated from it by a dense tangle of forest trees and underbrush which, while deadening the sound, relieved it of none of its ominous quality. I sent an aid-de-camp to investigate, but he was gone nearly an hour, during the whole of which time the distant roar continued without intermission. When he brought the welcome information that the fighting had long since ceased, that all was quiet along the army's front, and that the noise borne in upon us came from the wagon trains moving on the turnpike and plank roads toward Fredericksburg, we were relieved from our greatest anxiety, and Forsyth returned at once to his own camp. Shortly afterwards, he sent an order from Sheridan directing me to move as soon as I could see my way to the Germanna ford road and ascertain what the enemy were doing in that quarter. Quite as anxious as either Grant, Meade, or Sheridan could be, I was off betimes and by eight o'clock had scoured the entire region threaded by that road, almost back to the Rapidan. I found no sign of the enemy, and as soon as I satisfied myself that he had no adequate idea of the excitement and confusion his turning movement had created the night before, and that the crisis was over, I sent the proper information to

Sheridan and then rode rapidly to army headquarters, not only to reassure our commanders by a personal report but to see for myself how Grant had so far borne the strain and responsibility of the great campaign into which our advance had plunged us.

I found him surrounded by his staff on a cleared knoll at the edge of the forest, a short distance from the old Wilderness Tavern. Meade's headquarters occupied a portion of the same clearing a little to the southeast. Dismounting at the bottom of the hillock thirty or forty yards from his camp fire and handing the bridle to my orderly I started up the hill, when Grant, catching sight of me, threw up his hand and cheerily called out: "It's all right, Wilson; the army is moving toward Richmond!" He evidently read anxiety and apprehension in my countenance, knowing that I would favor advancing rather than falling back, and he made haste to reassure me. I have always regarded this as the greatest compliment Grant ever paid me, except that contained in his letter of October 4, 1864, to Sherman, for it showed that he knew what my advice would be and wished to anticipate it with the cheering information cited above.

I found him in a state of perfect composure, while his staff, with the exception of Rawlins and Bowers, were engaged in breaking camp and getting ready to take the road to the front. After a few minutes' conversation, in which I explained that the rebels had evidently not understood the extent of their success the night before and were making no movement on our right to improve it, I strongly favored the offensive as the surest way of bringing

the enemy to a general engagement in the open field, and was gratified beyond measure to find that this had already become Grant's settled policy and determination.

A few minutes later I withdrew to a private conversation with Rawlins and Bowers. It will be remembered that those officers had been with Grant from the first of the war, had seen him in every battle, and knew his idiosyncrasies better than any one else. From our first acquaintance they had no secrets from me, and on this occasion they made haste to say that the night before had tested Grant's fortitude and self-control more seriously than any event of his past career. Rawlins explained that the first news which reached headquarters from the right gave the impression that an overwhelming disaster had befallen our line, and that, although Grant received it with his usual self-possession, the coming of officer after officer with additional details soon made it apparent that the General was confronted by the greatest crisis of his life. Still he gave his orders calmly and coherently without any external sign of undue tension or agitation. But when all proper measures had been taken and there was nothing further to do but to wait, both Rawlins and Bowers concurred in the statement that Grant went into his tent, and, throwing himself face downward on his cot, gave way to the greatest emotion, but without uttering any word of doubt or discouragement. What was in his heart can only be inferred, but from what they said nothing can be more certain than that he was stirred to the very depths of his soul. How long he remained under extreme tension neither Rawlins nor Bowers stated, but they

were clear and emphatic in declaring that they had never before seen him so deeply moved as upon that occasion, and that not till it became apparent that the enemy was not pressing his advantage did he entirely recover his perfect composure.

Others who knew him less intimately and had never seen him in battle have stated that he showed no emotion whatever in that momentous emergency, but received the news of the disaster which threatened to overwhelm his army and put an end to his career with Spartan calmness and equanimity, and that, within ten minutes after receiving the last alarming report, "he was sleeping as soundly and peacefully as an infant."[1]

I have always regarded the statement of Rawlins and Bowers as not only far more reasonable, but far more creditable to Grant than the one last quoted, for it shows that after all he was not the stolid and indifferent man, without sensibility or emotion, which such impassibility at such a crisis would have indicated. With the certainty which soon followed the first alarming accounts that the enemy were not pressing their advantage, it was but natural that Grant should recover his composure. It was still more natural that with the soul of a true hero he should resolve to resume the aggressive and "fight it out on that line if it takes all summer." As it turned out, this was exactly the right course to adopt and to adhere to, not only for the whole summer, but till the end of the war. It was doubtless during the trying night of May 6 that Grant reached the sound conclusions which

[1] "Campaigning with Grant," by Gen. Horace Porter, p. 67, *et seq.*

he began the next day by his forward movement to put into effect, and of which, by his memorable dispatch of May 11, he made haste to reassure the Government, and the people.[1]

In his interview with me on the morning of the 7th, he summed up the situation with the characteristic statement that, although we had not beaten the enemy, the enemy had certainly not beaten us, that while we had lost many officers and men the enemy must have lost as many, and that if we were justified in fighting him for two days as we had done, we were still more justified in continuing the fight till we had gained a complete victory no matter how long it took. In conversation with me he commended the part the cavalry had played, but expressed dissatisfaction with the slowness and the caution of the infantry commanders. While he made no allusion whatever to his emotions of the night before, he spoke with calmness and confidence of yet forcing Lee to give battle in the open country beyond the Wilderness, and of beating him or compelling him to retreat. With the conviction that this courageous policy was not only sound but would ensure victory in the end, I rejoined my division with a lighter heart and greater confidence than I had felt at any time since crossing the Rapidan.

Having, in my "Life of Grant,"[2] given as full an account of the campaign and battles in the Wilderness as seems to be necessary for the general reader, I now return to incidents of a more personal nature.

[1] O. R. Serial No. 67, pp. 2, 3, 4.

[2] "Life of Ulysses S. Grant," by Dana & Wilson, Gurdon Bill & Co., Springfield, Mass., etc., 1868.

Generally speaking, my division held the left and front of the advance. It covered the movement of Grant's left in the direction of Spottsylvania Court House till the cavalry corps cut loose from the army and began its independent operations against the railroad which connected Lee and his army with their base at Richmond. Early on the 7th I occupied Aldrich's Farm, and, crossing the River Ny, drove back the rebel pickets toward Spottsylvania Court House. But the Infantry failing to come to my support, as I supposed it would, night put an end to my operations. My first brigade bivouacked at Tabernacle Church, and my second at Silver's Farm. The night passed without incident, for the enemy had not yet made his appearance in front. I was, however, directed to continue my movement at five o'clock on the morning of the 8th through Spottsylvania Court House toward Snell's Bridge. By nine o'clock I had brushed Wickham's brigade of Stuart's cavalry out of the way and occupied the court house. By a rapid and vigorous advance, I captured forty-five prisoners from the rear and right of Longstreet's corps which had already passed to the left of the village, and recaptured a number of our men whom the enemy had captured from our advancing infantry earlier that morning or late the day before. A hasty examination of the prisoners convinced me that I was in Longstreet's rear, marching by a cut-off road to forestall Grant in his movement on Spottsylvania. It was evident, therefore, that, unless promptly supported by Burnside or other infantry from the rear, I should have to give up the advantageous position I had so easily gained. Although neither cavalry

nor infantry came to my support, I held the court-house till eleven o'clock, when an order came from Sheridan directing me not to go there at all, but to fall back by the road I had advanced upon to a place marked on the map as "Alsop's Gate." As the perils were thickening, and reënforcement nowhere in sight, I withdrew to the point indicated without further encountering the enemy.[1]

Thus it will be observed that my division was the only part of Grant's army that ever occupied Spottsylvania Court House till Lee had given up his lines in front of that place and withdrawn toward Richmond. But it has always been my conviction that had Burnside pushed promptly through the Wilderness to the left and front he might have joined me in time to make good the position I had gained. With such a union of cavalry and infantry in Lee's right rear, there would have been nothing left for him but to fall back to a new position beyond the next river, or suffer an overwhelming defeat. The bloody battles which took place for the capture and defense of Spottsylvania Court House would have been avoided and many thousand lives would have been spared to continue operations under much more favorable circumstances. It was a great opportunity lost, but rapid infantry marching in those days was not in fashion. Upon this particular occasion, no one in authority seems to have given the slightest thought to the opportunity offered, nor to have had the slightest idea as to the value of celerity in such operations. The custom of out-marching and out-flanking the enemy had not yet made its appearance in that army, and even after

[1] O. R. Serial No. 67, pp. 991, 871, 878.

it came it was of painfully slow and uncertain growth.[1]

In the direct movement from Todd's Tavern toward Spottsylvania Court House the other two divisions of the cavalry corps had the advance. They were expected to clear the road to Snell's Bridge and at or near that place to form a junction with me, and although they started early the night before, May 7, they soon met the enemy and, becoming hotly engaged, were forced to stay their advance. Stuart's cavalry got there first. Sheridan never reached Snell's Bridge, but was shortly forced to one side by the resistance of the enemy and the oncoming of the Fifth and Sixth Corps. Warren, commanding the Fifth, years afterwards complained bitterly of the way in which Torbert and Gregg delayed the march of his weightier columns and compelled them between waking and sleeping throughout a long and tiresome night to creep slowly to the front. He always contended that the cavalry should have kept together on the left flank and given the infantry a clear road. As it was, both the Fifth and the Sixth Corps were compelled more than once to halt and develop line of battle during the night. With all they could do, they made but poor progress, and by daylight found themselves stopped altogether. It was shortly after this that Meade rode upon the field, but the opposing lines were already formed, and, after looking over the situation, which was now clearly one of a deadlock or an impasse, Meade turned to Warren and, as related several years afterwards by the latter, said:

[1] O. R. Serial No. 67, pp. 18, 190, 191, 326, 871, 907.

"Warren, I want you to coöperate with Sedgwick and see what can be done."

Whereupon Warren, who had been Meade's chief-of-staff, and had doubtless been accustomed to talking plainly with him, said:

"General Meade, I'll be God d——d if I'll cooperate with Sedgwick or anybody else. You are the commander of this army and can give your orders and I will obey them; or you can put Sedgwick in command and he can give the orders and I will obey them; or you can put me in command and I will give the orders and Sedgwick shall obey them; but I'll be God d——d if I'll *coöperate* with General Sedgwick or anybody else."

Strange as it may seem, Meade took no notice of this extraordinary speech, but, leaving the command largely to Sedgwick, who was the senior, devoted himself to bringing more troops to the front. It was while looking at the enemy's position and encouraging his men the next day that the heroic Sedgwick was shot through the head and instantly killed.

It is scarcely conceivable that such language could have been used to the commander of an army by one of his subordinates, and when I told Warren that if I had been in Meade's place I should have sent him to the rear in arrest, he replied that he knew to whom he was talking, and then added, with pensive sadness, that if he had been arrested at that time it would probably have saved him from a greater misfortune afterwards. In this he was doubtless alluding to the fact that Sheridan, at the close of the battle of Five Forks, relieved him from command for hesitation and slowness which might

never have been charged against him had Meade properly resented the insubordinate language quoted above.

Warren, it is but fair to observe, was a gallant West Point officer of great experience and fine ability, who was generally regarded as one of the most capable corps commanders our army ever had, but he was captious and impatient of control, and perhaps naturally became more and more accustomed to the use of violent language as he beheld with what fatuity the Army of the Potomac was commanded. Certain it is that toward the latter part of his career he hardly ever received an order which he did not criticize nor a suggestion which he did not resent, but I am persuaded that no man in the army knew better than he the difference between discussion looking to delay or to change of plan and prompt obedience to a positive order from his superior. On the occasion mentioned above, he doubtless meant to rebuke Meade, who had apparently directed coöperation without carefully considering that it was a formless and almost meaningless use of words where positive orders would have been far more creditable to himself as well as more certain to secure the best efforts of the general to whom they were directed.

This incident recalls another in which Warren took part a few weeks later and in which he made himself most disagreeable to me and my staff. It was shortly after the costly and unfortunate battle at Cold Harbor. Sheridan had been detached with two divisions to break up the railroads north of Richmond, while I was left to cover the passage of the Chickahominy and the march to the James. The

orders for this movement, as I construed them, contemplated that the first pontoon bridge should be laid at the site of Long Bridge after nightfall under Warren's supervision, and, that done, I was to cross and push out with Chapman's brigade toward White Oak Swamp and Richmond, and thus cover and screen the movements of the infantry behind.

In accordance with my invariable custom, my command was mounted and at the appointed place on the minute, but the pontoniers had not laid the bridge, and the advance was correspondingly delayed. It was soon dark, and, as the bridge site was near at hand, I naturally kept close watch upon it in order that I might get under way at the earliest possible moment, but, as the pontoniers were doing nothing, I sent an officer to Warren, calling his attention to the fact that the bridge was not ready, and my advance could not begin. As this produced no effect I shortly sent another officer with a similar message and the same result. It was now after nine o'clock, and the delay was becoming serious. My impatience was increasing, and this finally caused me to send Lieutenant Yard, my junior aide-de-camp, with a still more urgent message and an injunction to ride fast. He was back in a few minutes, his face flaming and his eyes suffused with tears. He was but a boy, and although much agitated by the incident reported at once:

"General, I gave your compliments and message to General Warren, exactly as you gave them to me, but, instead of receiving me politely, he cursed me out and then with a loud and insulting oath said: 'Tell General Wilson if he can't lay that

bridge to get out of the way with his damned cavalry and I'll lay it.' "

While I was amazed at this rough and discourteous message, I lost no time in sending my three West Point officers, Andrews, Beaumont, and Noyes, either of whom was quite as competent as Warren to lay a bridge, all at once to take charge of the job, while my Adjutant Captain Siebert, with ready alacrity, threw a detachment across the creek on drift logs and overhanging trees and drove the enemy's pickets from the opposite bank. The operation was a simple and effective one. The bridge was soon ready and although the night was well advanced the cavalry crossed at once and pushed the enemy rapidly back upon his supports. The next day we advanced to the Charles City crossroads, where Warren, with his leading division, joined us shortly after sunup. As I had not seen him personally for several days, he not only greeted me in complimentary terms, but, much to my surprise, extended his hand politely, as though nothing had passed to disturb our relations. Recalling his rude message the night before I declined to shake hands, coldly remarking that he must excuse me. Thereupon he asked what was the matter, to which I replied I did not care to have anything to do with a general who would insult an aid-de-camp and send such a message as he had sent me the night before. To my surprise he did not seem to remember clearly, and, declaring that he didn't mean an offense, offered what was evidently a sincere apology for his rudeness.

This, of course, closed the incident for the time, but a few days later I found myself at Grant's head-

quarters near the crossing of the James River. The campaign had not been going as rapidly or as satisfactorily as he wished. The different army corps had begun to show the qualities of the balky team to which he afterward likened them, and success was far from presenting itself as it had on every field of the west. The general was evidently feeling the strain of the situation and, in the resulting frame of mind, said:

"Wilson, what is the matter with this army?"

I replied at once:

"General, there is a great deal the matter with it, but I can tell you much more easily how to cure it."

Whereupon he asked me: "How?"

"Send for Parker, the Indian chief, and, after giving him a tomahawk, a scalping knife, and a gallon of the worst whiskey the Commissary Department can supply, send him out with orders to bring in the scalps of major generals."

This brought a smile to the General's face, promptly followed by the question: "Whose?"

Quite as promptly, I replied:

"Oh, the first he comes to, and so on in succession till he gets at least a dozen."

The General evidently understood what I meant and far from resenting my suggestion, without a moment's pause, asked: "But where shall we get generals to fill their places?"

To which I replied:

"Oh, that's easy! To use a favorite phrase of yours, every brigadier in this army 'will step up and take sugar in his'n';" by which I meant such

as might be selected would promptly accept any higher grade coming his way.

With a smile showing that he understood the allusion, his face grew more serious as he asked if I had any particular person in mind. And thereupon I described Warren's conduct the night we crossed the Chickahominy. As though he had heard complaints of that officer before, the General added at once: "Well, I'll take care of Warren anyhow." And from that day forward, there is reason to believe he kept Warren under close observation.

The simple fact was that the army organization itself was bad throughout. The staff arrangements were sadly defective and orders for movements were frequently lacking in detail and coherence, and were, therefore, executed poorly and ineffectually. With the Army of the Potomac composed of the Second, Fifth and Sixth Corps and cavalry corps, with Hunter's independent force in the Valley of Virginia, with Butler's Army of the James, based on Fortress Monroe, and with Burnside's corps independent of these three separate organizations, operations were generally lacking in coordination and coherence, if not in vigor. Grant's staff, while composed of able and energetic men, was not organized to supervise or direct military movements. Rawlins, his chief-of-staff, although from civil life, possessed as much vigor and practical experience as any volunteer in the army, but soon after coming east he began to lose control over policies as well as over details. He was, besides, in bad health and naturally felt some hesitation in asserting himself in the presence of others and especially of the regulars who now constituted the

larger part of Grant's working staff. Besides it was Grant's declared policy to give his orders in general terms, leaving those to whom they were directed free to carry out the details in their own way. The result with so big and complicated a machine was far from satisfactory.

I have always thought that had Grant at the start consolidated the various corps in Virginia into a single army and organized his staff, not only for gathering information and making orders, but for supervising their execution, the results must have been far better. With corps and division commanders differing in talents, temperament, and idiosyncrasies and their forces spread out in a thinly settled country abounding in rivers, creeks, forests, and dirt roads, it was natural that they should look at matters from different points of view, that they should differ in regard to the best way of reaching and engaging the enemy, and that their final movements should be neither synchronous nor well designed to accomplish the results at which all were aiming. With such officers as Sherman, McPherson, and Thomas, each commanding an army corps, coherence was fairly obtained, and it was safe to leave minor details to be worked out by them, but in Virginia, with a much wider and more difficult *terrain* and much greater numbers, a different policy and a compact organization of the staff as well as of the armies would doubtless have brought about better results.

While the strategy and logistics of the Overland campaign, as it was called, were good, if not brilliant, the tactics, both minor and grand, were of the simplest kind, the infantry marching was in nearly

every instance culpably slow, the order of battle was generally parallel and in single line, and, as the enemy was nearly always strongly entrenched and on the defensive, the attacking forces lost heavily from the start. They naturally grew more and more timid as they advanced into the enemy's country. Then, too, it is not to be denied that the corps commanders and troops were somewhat inclined to doubt Grant's superiority over the generals who had previously led them. Many openly declared that he had not so far met either the Confederacy's best generals or its best troops, and more than once good patriotic officers openly expressed the opinion that Grant would find Lee a very much more difficult man to beat than Buckner, Pemberton, Joe Johnston, or Bragg. A few went even further and said: "When Lee takes command of both armies, as he has done several times before, we shall go rattling back to the Potomac."

This feeling was not allayed, but rather strengthened, by the earlier events of the Overland campaign, and it was still arousing the apprehension of the timid, when Gordon's turning movement overwhelmed the right flank of the Sixth Corps in the Wilderness. At all events, from that time forth till the beginning of the final campaign next year the Army of the Potomac seemed generally to lack both *élan* and coherence, while its attacks were made with decreasing vigor and determination. Of course, there were notable exceptions, such as the attack of Hancock and Upton at Spottsylvania, and of Baldy Smith and Upton at Cold Harbor, but, withal, it is safe to say that the one thing which held the army to its bloody work was its superiority of num-

bers and resources and Grant's unshakable resolution to continue the campaign till he had worn out Lee and his army by persistence, superiority of numbers, and "mere attrition," if not by superior strategy and fighting.[1]

[1] See Grant's final report, O. R., also "Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant," Vol. II, p. 555.

XVI

GRANT IN THE WILDERNESS

Sheridan's raid against Lee's communications—Battle of Yellow Tavern—Death of J. E. B. Stuart—Affair near Richmond—Passage of the Chickahominy—James River—Return to Grant's army—Turn Lee's left at Jericho Mills—Meet Grant and Rawlins—Army gossip.

The infantry and artillery of the two armies at last facing each other in the Wilderness, in what has been aptly called a death-grapple, there was little required of the cavalry but to come together on the extreme left and front, to cover any turning movement Grant might make around Lee's right, or to cut loose entirely, throwing itself with all its weight against Lee's cavalry and his communications. For the first time, Sheridan had his corps, fully twelve thousand men in the saddle, united and well in hand. Each division had filled its part in the preliminary operations, but, working separately, had done but little more than develop the enemy's movements, while screening our own.

At dawn, May 9, we began a coöperating campaign against Lee's communications with Richmond. The redoubtable but over-praised Stuart, with two divisions, somewhat strung out, was promptly in pursuit, but, withal, we were able to

make way toward the south without material difficulty or delay. We found the country open and fairly well supplied with food and forage, but the old Virginia farmsteads showed the usual signs of poverty and exhaustion. The landscape, like that of the entire Piedmont region, was most beautiful, the country fine and rolling, and both fields and streams fringed with growing timber. We found but few houses with any pretensions to elegant architecture and none to prosperity. The white men of military age were all in the army, while even the old men and women generally fled upon our approach. Even the negroes and the farmstock hid in the woods till we passed.

My division had the lead the first day, camping that night near Anderson's Bridge, on the North Anna River. At daylight on the 10th I encountered and drove the enemy's advanced detachments to the south side, covering the passage of the Second Division, the rear guard of which became strongly engaged with the rebel cavalry coming down from Lee's army. It had discovered our movements, but was too weak in front to delay us seriously. All that day, however, we had sharp skirmishing to the South Anna River, which we crossed at the Ground Squirrel Bridge with but little trouble. The whole corps bivouacked that night south of the bridge, and early the next morning continued its march toward Richmond, the first division in advance, the second bringing up the rear. Although both front and rear were skirmishing more or less actively throughout the day, my men in the middle of the column did not fire a shot till the afternoon, when we came up with the enemy under Stuart in

force near the Yellow Tavern, on the main Richmond road, ten or twelve miles north of the city. Custer's brigade was first to develop the enemy's position without becoming actively engaged. As my division was following closely, with Chapman's brigade in the lead, we went rapidly into line on Custer's left. It was evident from the deliberate movements and strong show of force that a serious fight was at hand, and with that confidence and dash which always come with the consciousness of strength, a general rush was made upon the enemy posted in the edge of the field beyond the Tavern, and in an incredibly short time we overbore his line, carried his position, and drove his men in confusion from the field. It was a spirited affair, in which Colonel Chapman, the brigade commander, and Colonel Preston of the Third Vermont led his splendid regiment in a mounted charge with flashing sabers against the enemy's center, while I directed the dismounted men against his right with the result that we captured his guns, crumpled up his dismounted line, and broke it into hopeless fragments. Custer, with the First Michigan mounted and the rest of his brigade dismounted, charged abreast of Chapman farther to the right and was also fully successful, but while my men were pressing the enemy Custer halted to gather up the spoils and to sound pæans of victory.[1]

From the accounts of this brilliant affair, which soon found their way into the newspapers, it might have been supposed that Custer's brigade did all the fighting and was entitled to all the credit, while as a matter of fact my whole division was present,

[1] O. R. Serial No. 67, pp. 790, 879, 898.

and it was well understood by all who saw it that the modest Chapman did fully half the fighting and was entitled to fully half the credit. In the general mêlée following the first charge every man did his duty, and much gallantry was displayed, but, after all, the victory was far more easily gained than might have been expected. The truth is that while we had only about three thousand men actually engaged, supported by seven thousand more within close call, Stuart had not more than two thousand five hundred men in our front under his personal command, while his other division was too far to the rear to give him any help. It will be seen, therefore, that the advantage was from the first in our favor, and that it was not a battle *à outrance,* between Sheridan and Stuart, nor between their respective corps on a fair and open field. But it was not without decided and important results, for, as we learned later, Stuart, who commanded in person, received a mortal wound early in the fight and was carried into Richmond, where he died the next day. It was this fact that made the affair an epoch in the history of the Confederate cavalry. Stuart, knowing the defenseless condition of Richmond and assuming that it was Sheridan's objective, staked his all in vainly trying to check his antagonist's dashing onset. While the calm and imperturbable Wade Hampton, a far steadier and more judicious leader, succeeded Stuart in command, it soon became known to us that the Confederate cavalry as well as the Confederate infantry in Virginia were overweighted, and therefore destined to be completely defeated in the end.

We naturally thought at first that Stuart's whole

corps had confronted us at the Yellow Tavern and that, having defeated him in fair fight, our supremacy was assured. I have never been one of those who regarded him as the Rupert of the Confederate army. He was a hardy, cheerful, and gallant leader, full of enterprise and daring, but by no means an invincible or even a model cavalryman. Like Kilpatrick, he generally overworked his men and horses in useless raids and seems never to have fully realized the advantage of operating in masses in close coöperation with the infantry. His failure to cover Lee's concentration at Gettysburg and his absence from that field were mistakes which have never been satisfactorily explained. The simple fact is he was as great a favorite with Lee as Sheridan was with Grant, and seems to have had *carte blanche* to do about as he pleased. Although without previous military training, Hampton in the East and Forrest in the West were quite his equals in personal prowess and leadership, while Hampton was certainly his superior in administration and generalship. While both were finally outweighted and overborne, Hampton never divided his forces in the face of his opponent, but, as will be pointed out more in detail further on, he used his entire corps with consummate ability a few weeks later, first against Sheridan, north of Richmond, and second against me, south of Petersburg. Having a central position and shorter lines, he lacked nothing but weight to use us both up completely. As it was, he forced Sheridan to retire from Trevellian Station by a wide detour, and gave me all I could do to save my command and rejoin the army from which both had been detached and sent on divergent and dangerous

missions in flagrant violation of well-established military principles.

After a few hours at the Yellow Tavern, during which the corps closed up and men and horses rested and fed, we resumed our movement toward Richmond.

In pursuance of verbal instructions, our march began at 11 P. M., with my division in the lead and the other divisions following. Our purpose was not at any time to attack Richmond, but to cross the Chickahominy, which encircled and covered it as a wet ditch, and march between it and the defenses of Richmond by the way of Fair Oaks Station to Haxall's Landing on the James. Our route lay along the Brook turnpike southward to within five miles of the city, and then turned to the left by country roads along the south bank of the Chickahominy to the Virginia Central Railroad and the Mechanicsville turnpike, which we reached just before daylight, without opposition or unusual delay. But the night was an exciting one. We were within a few miles of the Confederate capital, and while we knew neither the strength of its garrison nor the position of the cavalry which we had defeated, we kept a sharp lookout in all directions. While there was no fighting, my column was thrown into some confusion by exploding torpedoes, planted in the turnpike along which we were marching. Supposing that the actual explosions indicated other mines, we naturally took the roadside where the country would permit it, and fortunately met nothing else to halt or delay us till the advance reached the Mechanicsville turnpike. Here my guide with some trepidation declared he could take us no far-

ther, without explaining the reason, which became all too evident a few minutes later. Having no time to waste, I halted long enough to send an officer to a neighboring house for another guide. Day was just dawning when he returned with a farmer who said he knew the country thoroughly. While somewhat surprised at our presence, he offered no objection to serving us, and at once asked if I knew where we were, to which I replied I had a vague idea we were wedged in between the fortifications of Richmond on the one hand and the Chickahominy on the other, and that they could not be far apart. Thereupon the new guide said: "You're right, but you are also up against a battery of heavy guns not two hundred yards away completely sweeping the road on which you are standing as well as the country on both sides, and it is impossible to pass between that battery and the river." Realizing at once that we might be in a tight place, I ordered my aid-de-camp, Captain Whitaker, to ride up the road toward the rebel lines. Although it was still quite dark, his large, gray horse could be plainly seen for fifty or sixty yards, but had just disappeared from view when the whole side of the heavens seemed lit up by a flash, followed instantly by the roar of cannon and the rush of hot air and round shot down the road on which I was standing with my staff and orderlies. Several horses were disemboweled, several had their legs knocked off and floundered into the ditches by the roadside, while the staff swept back a few yards toward the river, taking cover under the brow of the hill overlooking the bottom beyond. Fortunately, neither officer nor man was seriously injured, though several were

badly bruised. As I escaped without being dismounted, I hurriedly ordered the two brigade commanders to dismount the whole division and throw out their dismounted men toward the fortifications, while screening their led horses in the valley of the Chickahominy to our rear. Although the situation was exciting, as we were in a *cul de sac,* with fortifications to the front not three hundred yards away, and a river not half that distance to the rear, my orders were executed without confusion. My two batteries, under their splendid young leaders, Fitzhugh and Pennington, were thrown promptly into position and were soon combing the crests of the fortifications, now plainly in sight, while the dismounted troopers were deploying to the front. Their carbines made lively music and soon drove the Confederates back into their works. As it turned out, they were largely home guards, and, had we known it, we could have easily captured the city and its scanty garrison, as well as the Confederate Government, but, unfortunately, this was not Sheridan's plan. His first duty was to make good his position and get into the open country again. In the midst of the racket at its highest, Sheridan's aid, Captain Goddard, galloped up to me in great excitement, exclaiming: "General Sheridan orders you to hold your position at all hazards while he arranges to withdraw the corps to the north side of the river."

As there was nothing else to do unless we concluded to risk all in assaulting the enemy's works, after twitting the captain about the "ricochet hat" he wore, I said: "Go back to General Sheridan and tell him his orders shall be obeyed, but, like

John Phoenix in his celebrated fight with the editor of the San Diego *Herald,* say our hair is badly entangled in his fingers and our nose firmly inserted in his mouth, and we shall, therefore, hold on here till something breaks!" This was literally true, but our condition was not quite so desperate as it seemed. As daylight made the situation clearer we had but little difficulty in getting rid of the enemy, but as soon as we could look about, it became certain that we could not cross the Mechanicsville turnpike, that the fortifications actually rested on the brow of the hill overlooking the valley, and that there was no road whatever between them and the river. Having made good our position, there was nothing further to do but to hold on while Sheridan cleared the ground behind us, and repaired the bridge in rear of his center, and as soon as it became passable to withdraw by the flanks of divisions to the north side of the river.

As Custer covered the road to the rear, he was detailed to reconstruct the bridge, but, having no bridge train, he had to tear down the neighboring houses for the necessary materials. He was not an engineer, but with his West Point training he made short work of the job, and before the morning was half spent, although the enemy made a feeble show of advancing, Gregg, Merritt, and Custer had crossed and left me to bring off the rear. This, as it turned out, was a simple task, though Sheridan evidently thought it a complicated one, for he rode up and down the line, waving his hat and sword and encouraging the men by words both rude and profane to hold on firmly till their comrades were all safely out of the way. Inasmuch, however, as the enemy

did not press us and our men were steady veterans who had been in tight places many times before, the movement was completed without loss or confusion, and with my escort I was the last to cross.

During this episode Sheridan was as much excited as any man in the command. He evidently thought the corps was in an exceedingly dangerous position, and that if attacked in force he might lose a large part, if not the whole, of his command. He certainly had no thought of assuming the offensive or attacking the fortifications, but was bent upon getting out of a bad box as best he could. That done, the next step was to march to a junction with Butler, then supposed to be at or in the neighborhood of Bermuda Hundred. We needed rations and forage badly and had no means of knowing that the Confederate capital was without an adequate garrison. In his reports, as well as in his less formal explanations, Sheridan always claimed that he did not go into Richmond merely because he had no orders to do so, and this was literally the truth, but from the Confederate accounts of the situation it is now certain that the capture of that place would have been easy work for the twelve thousand troopers Sheridan had with him. According to the facts, it was an opportunity in which audacity and a bold stroke might gain a notable success. With Richmond firmly in our possession, and Butler's army only a few miles to the southeast, we could easily have made good our position, and this must have produced a tremendous impression upon Lee and the Confederacy.

As it was, our advance had hardly got across the Chickahominy before that part of Stuart's com-

mand we had fought the day before at Yellow Tavern, having cut across country, undertook to bar our further progress, but it was an easy task to brush them out of the way and resume our march by Mechanicsville and Pole Green Church to Gains' House, where we encamped that night.

The next day we crossed the Chickahominy at Bottom's Bridge and marched thence to Malvern Hill, the scene of McClellan's greatest defensive battle, to Haxall's Landing on the James, where we encamped early on the morning of the 14th. The country was familiar to our officers and men, but it was entirely stripped of forage and food, and, therefore, we were anxious to get through it and open communications with Butler's transports and depots beyond. On arriving at the river we got the New York papers, from which we first heard of Sedgwick's death and of Grant's encouraging message: "I propose to fight it out on this line if it takes all summer."

Having reached a place of safety and plenty, both officers and men felt quite exultant over their long and successful march, and were encouraged by the hope that with our assistance Butler would be able to isolate Richmond, destroy its communications, compel Lee to let loose in front of Grant, and hurry back to the defense of Richmond. But this hope, like many others during that summer, was destined to disappointment. As far as we could make out, Butler was doing but little, and, while it was pretty certain that Lee was slowly falling back before Grant, Sheridan, as soon as he had secured supplies, determined to retrace his steps and rejoin Grant, wherever he might be found. Mean-

while, knowing what I did from service along the southern coast, I wrote to Dana, urging that the forces employed in useless coastwise expeditions, amounting to some eighteen or twenty thousand men, should be at once brought to Butler's support, although it was evident even at that early date that Butler was at outs with Gillmore and perhaps with other subordinate commanders, and that, therefore, it would be better to put that part of the army under someone in whom it would have greater confidence.

While the men were resting and drawing supplies I accompanied Sheridan to Bermuda Hundred, where I met Butler as well as Baldy Smith, his next in command, and was not long in discovering that they were at outs with each other. The entries in my diary at the time show that the divided command and responsibilities of that Department were far from working satisfactorily. Subsequent developments made it certain that this view was correct, and as they were confirmed by Morgan and Bowen, both regular officers of high character and great ability, I was justified in the conclusion that I ought to make both Rawlins and Grant acquainted with the real situation on the James as soon as I could safely do it.

On May 16 we learned through Richmond papers that Stuart had died of the wounds received at Yellow Tavern and that the Confederate authorities regarded his loss as irreparable.

For some reason, not explained and now difficult to understand, Sheridan decided to begin his return march by night of the 17th. His route lay nearly due north to Jones' Bridge and Mount Oli-

vette Church, but as the roads were bad and our teams worse, our progress was but slow. On the 18th we made only five miles, and on the 19th three. Starting at dawn of the 20th, my division camped at an early hour on the Mattadequin Creek near the house of President Tyler's widow, where we enjoyed strawberries and cream, ice water, and hospitality in exchange for protection. In this fine old house and others like it along the line of march I found a lot of old-time but excellent books, among others Zimmerman's "Solitude," "The Life of Thomas Jefferson," and the "Life of Suvarrow," all published before 1810. I was familiar, of course, with the campaigns of the Russian General, but had never before seen an analysis of his character, the author's summary of which praised him for personal activity and bravery, for never hesitating a moment to attack his enemy, whether en route or in position, and for never waiting to receive an onslaught. His plans were praised as conforming to correct principles, which were always carried out with such frenzy of desperation as to make them invariably successful. The lesson was a good one for our army till the end of the war.

In our deliberate march northward I had considerable time for reflection, as well as for reading. The Richmond papers fell into our hands almost daily and told us how Grant was pressing steadily but slowly by the way of Guiney and Milford stations along the Fredericksburg Railroad toward Richmond.

After conferring fully with Sheridan in regard to Butler's campaign on the James and its relations to Grant's more important movements north

of Richmond, we concurred in the conclusion that we should put our views in writing and send them by courier, mine to Rawlins and Sheridan's to Colonel Comstock, and this was done. Both urged that Butler should be relieved and his army turned over to Baldy Smith, with orders to push the enemy vigorously, first to capture Petersburg, and second to destroy the railroads south of Petersburg and Richmond for the purpose of cutting off the supplies passing through those places to Lee's army north of them.

While still resting at Mrs. Tyler's house and reading criticisms from her library of Napoleon, Wellington, and Washington, we heard heavy cannonading toward Fredericksburg, and this continued at intervals the whole of the next day, but what it meant we did not find out till after we rejoined the army.[1]

Marching at 3:30, May 22, we arrived at the White House, near the head of York River, at 11 A. M., and there replenished our supplies from transports at that place. Sheridan had sent to Fortress Monroe for a pontoon train, but the next day we crossed the Pamunkey on the railroad bridge, two hundred and seventy yards long, which we planked over with boards gathered from the neighboring country. Our route lay through King William Court House and Dunkirk to Aylett's Station, and during the whole day we heard heavy and continuous sound of artillery from the direction of Hanover Junction, more than twenty miles to the westward. The roar was as loud and continuous as any I ever heard ex-

[1] The enemy attacked the Sixth Corps at Spottsylvania, O. R. Serial No. 67, p. 193.

cept on the battlefield. Custer had been detached in that direction for the purpose of destroying the bridges just north of that place, and the sounds which reached us were from his guns, but, having encountered a strong force moving northward, his efforts were unsuccessful. Had the whole corps gone with him the result must have been different, but, operating as we did far to the eastward, our whole movement, so far as it concerned Lee's communications was disappointing. While we broke his railroads going south, first at Beaver Dam and later at Ashland, capturing three trainloads of provisions with one million five hundred thousand rations, a supply of forage for our half-starved horses, and a large quantity of medical stores, besides recapturing three hundred and seventy-five Union prisoners, we did not pay sufficient attention to the destruction of the enemy's railroads, either going or returning. But the enemy's mistakes were much greater than ours. While our force was generally united in a compact mass, his was scattered, part in our rear and part in our front, and although this was more or less disconcerting, as it caused Sheridan to minimize the work of destruction, it did not prevent him from moving against and engaging the enemy whenever he came within reach. But, having no precise information as to Grant's progress, or of Lee's exact position from day to day, we were perhaps overcautious in our own movements, which we carried on as far to the east as the necessity of crossing the rivers and estuaries flowing into the Chesapeake would allow.

Withal we rejoined the Army of the Potomac on May 24 at Old Chesterfield Court House, having

been sixteen days absent, four of which we passed on the James and two on the York, leaving ten spent in marching and fighting. Our entire loss was two hundred and ninety-five men and officers. The total distance traveled was approximately one hundred and forty miles, or, not counting the days in camp, an average of about fourteen miles per day.

It should be observed that from the time Sheridan cut loose from the army at Spottsylvania till he rejoined it he was practically operating in the open country against Lee's communications and the Confederate capital with his three divisions of cavalry, united and well in hand, while Stuart had but two divisions and not more than two-thirds as many men operating separately for their defense. The advantages were largely in our favor and the opportunity a great one for striking a vital blow. Now that it is all over and the records of both sides available, it is apparent that we might not only have defeated the Confederates again, as we did at Yellow Tavern, but could easily have destroyed the railroads and captured Richmond, had we but known their defenseless condition.

The fact is that neither Sheridan, his generals, nor his command had yet entirely found themselves. The generals were more or less unacquainted with each other and with Sheridan, and this sufficiently accounts for the absence of that vigor and coherence which afterward characterized their operations. Sheridan was operating not only in a new field, but with a new command. While he had led a cavalry regiment for a few weeks in west Tennessee and had commanded a division of infantry for two years,

he was essentially an infantry officer till he was transferred to the Army of the Potomac. He belonged to that arm of the service since leaving West Point, and, although he had shown extraordinary steadiness and courage as a division commander, he had not yet acquired the self-confidence and independence which finally characterized him as one of the boldest and most successful cavalry leaders of his time. His career shows plainly that whatever may be a soldier's natural qualities or however high his education, it takes experience to give him confidence in an independent command and in fighting battles. Books teach most lessons of war fairly well. They lay down the established principles of strategy, logistics, and administration, and the industrious student may get almost everything out of them to make the perfect general except experience. That comes only with hard knocks and constant service, and experience thus acquired is the greatest of all requisites to a successful commander.

Immediately after rejoining the army we found it facing Lee on the South Anna River, where the situation had again become that of checkmate. Lee's position, covered as it was by the river, seemed to be unassailable by direct attack and Grant had evidently already made up his mind to turn it again by a side march to a lower crossing of the Pamunkey near Hanovertown. This brought the cavalry again to a condition of dispersion. My division, although just as tired and needing rest as badly as the others, was transferred at once to the right at Jericho Mills, where it crossed to the south side of the North Anna beyond the right of the Sixth Corps, whence it detached a dismounted force to cross Little

River for the purpose of making a demonstration against Lee's left and rear.[1] While this was going on the other two divisions remained at rest two days in camp at Polecat Station in rear of the army. Had they been sent with me and all three divisions been hurled against the left and rear of the enemy, he must have been greatly shaken, if not thrown into inextricable confusion. As it was, my movement, taking Lee's left flank completely in reverse and threatening his communications with Hanovertown, was a complete success and, accompanied by a spirited carbine fire, which might well have been mistaken for the crashing roar of an infantry division, as well as by a noisy pretense of bridge building, all under the cover of darkness and a heavy cannonade from our twelve guns, was well calculated to shake Lee out of his position. As the possible advance of Grant's whole army, it certainly drew Lee's attention sharply to that quarter of the field, and, although I was forced by lack of weight and by ignorance of lay of the land to suspend my movement in the full tide of success, it was not till toward midnight that I ceased firing or withdrew my skirmishers, and recrossed both rivers to bivouac at Canfield's house. It was a hard day's work, followed by a night of great exposure and excitement, but I afterward learned, much to my gratification, that our operations were not only alarming and disconcerting to the enemy, but gave Grant a full day's start in his new turning movement.[2]

During the next three days I held the right of

[1] O. R. Serial No. 67, pp. 21, 794, 795, 808, 881.
[2] *Ib.*, pp. 21, 194, 872-5.

our army, conforming to and covering its movements and keeping watch and ward over its rear along the rivers which separated the hostile forces. In doing this we kept our horses constantly out of sight and showed only our dismounted men and field guns to the enemy, and this we did so effectually and with such a show of force as to conceal our real movements till the army made its appearance south of the Pamunkey some thirty miles away.

Although it was a period of ceaseless labor and constant vigilance, it afforded me an opportunity to visit Grant's headquarters at Chesterfield Court House and to confer with him and his staff. All gave me a hearty welcome and received my reports of marching, fighting, and observation with a full appreciation of their importance. Both Grant and Rawlins were deeply interested in what I told them of Butler's opportunities and of the unfortunate dissensions which marred the efficiency of his army. Rawlins had received my letter by courier and I have never doubted that the personal reports made independently of each other by Sheridan and myself were influential in moving Grant a few days later to withdraw Smith's corps from Butler's column to reënforce his own army, between the Totopotomoy and the Chickahominy. The front of maneuvers gradually grew narrower as we advanced toward Richmond and the battles became bloodier and more costly. These facts fully justified Rawlins' constant anxiety for reënforcements, whether by draft or by enlistments, while they imposed upon Grant the imperative duty of making his advance not only safe but invincible by calling every man

within reach to strengthen the army under his immediate control.

During this period I not only saw Grant and his staff frequently, but received several visits from Dana, Rawlins, and Babcock, all of whom showed unabated interest in my welfare and success. It was in the first of these visits that they explained the work of detraction and misrepresentation which had been carried on more or less openly against my division since I had been in command of it. They named a staff officer who had been talking and I reported him to Sheridan, who at once gave him an admonition which silenced him for good and all. The prejudices, selfish interests, and idle talk of an army made up of men from all callings and all parts of the country, although generally founded on gossip, are nearly always productive of evil. They mar or make fortunes without reference to conduct or real merit. The braggart and boaster, especially if he is skillful in getting in with the newspapers, frequently gains popular favor for much more than he is really worth, while the faithful and modest officer who attends strictly to duty is far too often condemned unheard. Our army showed many instances of this sort, and yet candor compels me to add that the modest man is not always the best soldier, nor the braggart always the worst. Some of the poorest officers I ever knew were as modest as women, while some of the best, while shamelessly sounding their own praises, were brave, dashing, and enterprising to an unusual degree. Such men frequently act as though conscious of having committed themselves to deeds of daring and feel compelled to make good at every hazard.

They rarely reach the highest distinction, while those of the more thoughtful and more steadfast kind are content to do their duty from time to time according to their best judgment and leave the rest to their record and to those in authority over them. In the long run the latter class prevail. The man who knows when to use his brains instead of his sword, when to put his command in and follow its movements with a watchful eye, and when to place himself at the post of danger, resolved to win or lose it all by his personal leadership, is a far more useful officer than the reckless and thoughtless man who undertakes to do all the fighting himself. This is just as true in our great war as in the other great wars of history. While it is sometimes hard for a subordinate to follow a campaign or a battle closely enough to know just what the next movement should be, it is still harder to judge correctly when to throw prudence, which is often a "rascally virtue," to the wind and stake all on personal courage and leadership. But the really good officer, when the time comes, takes the risk, far too frequently with a fatal result, though in the long run he and his kind win out and achieve real glory.

XVII

GRANT'S ADVANCE TO THE JAMES

Operations on Pamunkey and North Anna—Fights at Hanover Court House—Ashland and South Anna—Totopotomoy—Haw's shop—Behind Lee's left—Captain Ulffers—Prepared rations—Sheridan detached—Defeated by Hampton—Cold Harbor—Upton's comments.

During Grant's movement to the left along the north bank of the Pamunkey on the last days of May, 1864, I followed close behind his rear guard, picking up stragglers from the Ninth Corps and an occasional deserter from Lee's forces. From one of the latter I learned that Lee had begun his retrograde movement to Ashland Station almost immediately after my night attack against his left flank, and this information I deemed important enough to send to General Grant, as it indicated that Lee's new position would be twelve or fourteen miles south of Chesterfield, a few miles beyond the South Anna, behind which he would be free to move in any direction. It also made it certain that we were in but little danger of an offensive return. The march was therefore in the nature of rest and recreation. While it was under way I overtook my classmate, Captain Andrews, of the Eighth Infantry, who since the death of Sedgwick, on whose staff he had

been serving as an aid-de-camp, was in command of his company on foot. His entire baggage was tied up in a bandanna handkerchief and carried on his sword over his shoulder. He was weary, foot-sore, and despondent, and as soon as he saw me asked seriously if I knew where he could get the mouth-piece of a key bugle or any other part of a brass musical instrument. This puzzling question at once aroused my curiosity as well as my interest. He was a veteran of imperturbable temper and approved courage who had taken an honorable part in all the eastern campaigns and in many of the most important battles. I knew, therefore, that there was something behind his singular inquiry, but as I could not imagine what it was, I answered at once: "No! Why do you ask?" And this brought the reply, without the glimmer of a smile:

"Oh, I merely want to be considered as belonging to the band, which, you know, remains behind the fighting line and carries off the wounded. This is the only berth in this army where a man's life is worth a cent. Nearly everybody I know has been killed or wounded, and if this campaign, with its senseless assaults of entrenched positions and its ceaseless tributes of blood and death, is to continue much longer, my turn is sure to come soon, and I want to avoid that if I can honorably do so. Like our classmate, Martin, commanding his regiment at the vortex of the battle at Peach Orchard, where he could hear the bullets breaking the bones of his men like icicles falling from the eaves on a sunny morning, 'I feel exactly as though every minute might be my next!' "

The captain's grim but impressive humor was

followed by the first comment I had heard upon the rude and costly methods and the incompetency of corps and division commanders in that army, and from the specifications which followed I became convinced that the courage and confidence of both officers and men were not only slipping away, but that unless better methods and greater successes could be assured, we might meet with an overwhelming disaster any day. The condition of affairs was a grave one and, unfortunately, there was no sign from any quarter that a change for the better might be expected. Lee and his decimated ranks still grimly barred our road to Richmond and, as it turned out, exacted greater and greater tributes of blood and treasure before yielding to the inevitable.

A few days later I asked for and obtained Andrews' detail to my staff as aid-de-camp. Beaumont and Noyes, from the same staff, had already joined and, I may add, remained with me to the end of the war. They were all West Pointers, young, gallant, and accomplished, and, while they had many close calls from captivity and death, they escaped serious injury and disablement, led long and useful lives, and finally retired as colonels of the regular army. They were well fitted for high command, but those were strenuous days, in which the highest merit did not always receive adequate recognition or reward.

The Pamunkey, formed by the North and South Anna Rivers, is an exceedingly crooked stream, with many bends, swamps and small tributaries. My route lay through Mangohick Church and Pounce's Swamp toward New Castle Ferry and Hanovertown, and I was especially required to remain be-

hind, covering the trains and driving in the stragglers. Later I was directed to divide my command, sending one brigade south of the river for the purpose of occupying the line of Crump's Creek and to follow with the other as soon as everything in front had crossed the Pamunkey. This service was all safely accomplished by the last day of the month, when with my reunited division I was ordered to turn northwest up the river toward Hanover Court House. This speedily brought me in contact with the enemy's cavalry near Doctor Price's house, where a sharp and successful skirmish lasting till night took place.

Late on May 1 I was ordered to push out and destroy the railroad bridges northwest of Hanover Court House, to begin my march in that direction after dark, and to continue the work of destruction till it was all finished or till I was reënforced or withdrawn. This was a most important task. Four railroad bridges, two across the South Anna and two across Little River, were involved, and the primary object was to break the railroads north of Richmond connecting that place with the western part of the state through Gordonsville and Lynchburg. As this was an operation of the first importance which necessarily carried me in a circle around and toward Richmond, with the Pamunkey at my back, while our army was moving away from me to the southeast, it exposed me to the attack of the entire rebel cavalry, which, based on Richmond, had the short line against me from start to finish. The proper tactical use of the cavalry under the circumstances was to send the entire corps to assist in the work committed to me. This would have en-

abled it to destroy the bridges and railroad effectually in a few hours and would have given us, besides, an opportunity to crush or drive Hampton into the fortifications of Richmond or to compel him to take refuge behind Lee's army. As it was, the entire burden of the operations fell upon my division of four thousand sabers. My movement began at dark and soon brought me in contact with Pierce M. B. Young's Confederate brigade. He had been a West Point companion of mine, a private in my cadet company, and was an exceedingly handsome, gallant, and enterprising officer who accepted the gage of battle with all confidence when I offered it to him. Both McIntosh and Chapman, my brigade commanders, were men of dashing courage and at the word pushed their dismounted men across the creek, wounding Young himself through the body, and driving his men with a rush from the field toward the west.[1]

Our rest that night was but short, and at four o'clock the next morning we moved forward about four miles against the railroad. McIntosh with the stronger brigade struck it at Ashland Station, near the birthplace of Henry Clay, while Chapman moved divergently against the bridges several miles further to the northwest. At an early hour both were actively engaged, Chapman, under my special direction, with fire and torch and McIntosh with carbine and sword. It was a day of intense activity and excitement. All four bridges were successfully burned under the cover of a fierce fight front and rear between McIntosh and Hampton, five miles to the southwest. Nothing was permitted to

[1] O. R. Serial No. 67, pp. 21, 84, 880, 882.

interfere with the burning of the bridges and the breaking of the railroads. Chapman, the first to finish his task, was drawn back to form a junction with McIntosh, who was fiercely pressed on all sides. Much sharp fighting ensued and some confusion resulted, but our work was accomplished, the division reunited, and the road opened for our return to the army. After nineteen hours' marching and fighting we bivouacked at eleven o'clock that night in our old position at Hanover Court House, where we held on the whole of the next day, waiting for orders, during which we picked up a brigade of reënforcements coming from Port Royal under Colonel Cesnola. It was composed of motley detachments on the way to the army, and added but little to our strength and nothing to our mobility.

During the whole of the perilous operations about Hanover Court House and Ashland I was without orders from Sheridan and did not even know where or in what direction he was operating. My instructions came directly from Meade's headquarters and necessarily left me in doubt as to everything except what concerned my command. All the pickets between us and the army had been withdrawn and, finding myself entirely isolated, late on June 2 I determined to march toward Cold Harbor, but just before starting I received orders to follow up and conform to the movements of the army. Accordingly, at 7 P. M. I took the road, determined to go as far that night as Totopotomoy Creek, between twelve and fifteen miles to the southeast. It was raining hard and was dark and disagreeable, but for that reason exceedingly favorable to our operations. At 1:30 A. M. my advance

formed connection with Burnside's right, but Cesnola and his slow-marching infantry were not in position till ten o'clock the next morning.

For the first time my division was safely in reserve behind the right of Burnside's corps, but, notwithstanding our three days' constant fighting, marching, and vigil, no rest was permitted to us. Our losses since crossing the Pamunkey in killed and wounded had been about two hundred men, all of whom, except the dead, had been brought off and properly cared for, so that our ambulances were full of sick and wounded, while our cartridge boxes were almost empty. Besides, my men were so tired that they could hardly sit their jaded and half-famished horses.

Under these trying circumstances I received orders at ten o'clock that morning to sally out from behind Burnside, pass around Lee's left flank, and attack him in rear. Another day of fighting and blood was before us, and, while the exposure and peril were great, there was nothing left for us but to undertake it. Boots and saddles were sounded and our weary troopers remounted as soon as possible. Not a man murmured, but with scanty rations and forage it was slow and discouraging work to get ready for the road again. Withal, the entire division was soon in column, moving briskly against the enemy, which we expected to find at or near Haw's Shop and Salem Church, and we were not disappointed in our expectations. Sheridan found them there several days before and, as the country was well supplied with rifle pits for the defense of the roads leading toward Richmond, the prospect was recognized by every officer as an exceedingly

good one for a rough time, and a rough time ensued.

Chapman's brigade, with the gallant First Vermont leading, soon found themselves in contact with the enemy, but this time it was Gordon's old brigade of infantry, which meant a more determined resistance than even their best cavalry could give us. Dismounting the best regiments of both brigades and cheering them to the charge, the fight was on at once in earnest. Our horses were left behind and our gallant troopers of the First Vermont, the Fifth and Eighth New York in open order, with their rapid-fire carbines pouring out volley after volley, rushed with all the steadiness of the best infantry to the attack. The enemy made a brave but ineffectual stand in three successive lines of breastworks, but our men swept over them, one after the other, without hesitation, capturing prisoners and clearing up the country as they went along, but at a fearful cost of officers and men. The knightly Colonel Preston and the hard-fighting Captain Cushman of the Vermont regiment were killed at the head of their men, while the intrepid Colonel Benjamin of the Eighth New York and several junior officers and many men were wounded.[1] No better fighting was ever done by dismounted troopers, but the day's work was not yet over.[2] In gaining the shop and church and driving the enemy back on Mount Carmel Church, we had merely made good our possession of a congeries of cross-roads, uncovered the enemy's left, and opened the way to the Totopotomoy, two miles beyond Via's house

[1] O. R. Serial No. 67, pp. 874, 875, 882.
[2] *Ib.*, pp. 84, 87, 88, 194.

in rear of Lee's left, something over three miles from the scene of our first successes.

Although nightfall was now at hand, we pushed forward again, but this time the Second New York and the Third Indiana led the advance with four hundred dismounted troopers, forded the Totopotomoy and, with all the noise and racket they could make, threw themselves headlong against everything in their front. They soon found themselves fighting rebel infantry and under cover of the woods creating a tremendous commotion, but this time it was the left and rear of Lee's main line which they were pressing. A few more prisoners were taken, but, as we were engaged in a tangled forest which the shades of night made almost impenetrable for anything like a regular fighting line, I made my arrangements to withdraw, sounding the recall and issuing formal orders as soon as I became convinced that with Lee's infantry in front our attack had spent its force. As both our advance and our withdrawal were covered by a noisy fire of our two batteries at an effective range, our success was heightened, while the confusion of the enemy as to its extent and purpose was much increased. With three times the force the result might have been decidedly different.

As may be easily understood, our retirement in the dark was without disorder or delay, but it was well toward midnight before we were again in bivouac, with pickets properly posted and our exhausted and hungry men and horses again at rest.

I, of course, sent frequent couriers by the road on which we came to army headquarters, but when our work was done and the stories told by the

prisoners had been collected I sent my engineer, Captain Ulffers, an accomplished German topographer and surveyor, long resident in the States, in person to Meade's headquarters with a full report, but, relying on his knowledge of the country, I left him free to take what route he pleased. Being a man of but few words, he said nothing, and, unfortunately, decided to make a bee line by compass to the point at which he supposed he would find Meade and his staff. As it was pitch dark and the enemy's army lay directly across his route, he soon found himself riding into Lee's headquarters instead of Meade's. His surprise was, however, not greater than that of the Confederates from whom he inquired his way, but there was nothing further for him to do but surrender when told that he was in the midst of the rebel camps. Thus realizing that the longest way around is sometimes the shortest way home, he was chagrined to find himself a prisoner of war.

He was taken at once to Lee, who questioned him closely, but he was fully on his guard and told only what he thought would add to the night's confusion. The next day he was sent to Richmond and shortly afterward to Salisbury, North Carolina, where he was imprisoned and, as he always alleged, treated with cruelty which impelled him to escape if possible. Upon two occasions he got away, but was recaptured and taken back to the prison pen. On the third, guided by the stars, he escaped into South Carolina, and finally by traveling only at night succeeded in joining Sherman's army near Savannah. Being well known to all the leading generals, he received a hearty welcome, but, oddly

enough, his friends, instead of offering him food, which he needed badly, opened wine or poured out whisky so freely that he became hopelessly and helplessly drunk, and did not get over it for three days.

He rejoined me at Macon just as the war was closing, after a full year's absence, during which he had evidently suffered great hardship and privation. Reduced to skin and bones, the story of his adventures was touching in the extreme. In making his way south he avoided the highways and public roads and traveled through the woods, mostly by night. His only friends were the negroes, some of whom he had been warned against. He generally slept in the woods, but preferably in gin-houses, where he found a comfortable bed under the unginned cotton. On one occasion he was sleeping soundly when his uncovered head and his long and unkempt hair betrayed him. A violent blow on the head not only aroused but brought him to his feet in fear and trembling. He was greatly relieved by seeing that the blow had come from a little negro who had climbed into the window and mistaken his mat of hair in the dim light for a cat which he was hunting. Seeing the long, specter-like figure rising from the cotton, the boy screamed, fell out of the window backward, and ran yelling to the house as though a devil were after him. This brought the colored overseer to the scene, who, perceiving that an escaped Union prisoner had raised the alarm, got him across the field into the woods as soon as possible with such supplies and traveling directions as he needed for the next day and night. He had been especially warned against this man, but his kindness showed that however devoted he might be to his

master, he was at heart a Union man, anxious to see the Union armies prevail and slavery abolished. The captain averred that throughout his long and perilous journey he never failed to receive aid and comfort from the negroes, and never expected either from the white natives, no matter how poor they were. He was, therefore, one of the few Union men who was slow to forgive. After the war he became an assistant civil engineer on public works with me and afterward with General Weitzel, and finally died in the service, honored and respected by all who knew him. He was a gentleman of high education, worth, and modesty, belonging to the family of Ulffers von Nostitz, and while a prisoner his family anxiously inquired after him through Prussian diplomatic channels.

Shortly after one o'clock the morning of our demonstration against Lee's left I received a note from Meade, thanking me for my success and congratulating me on its good effect, but I could not help thinking how much more might have been accomplished had the whole corps gone with us, as it might well have done. By daylight the enemy had disappeared from the neighborhood of Via's house and was moving toward his right and rear.

Later in the day heavy firing prevailed in the direction of Cold Harbor, as though a battle were raging in that quarter. We kept constantly on the *qui vive* for the next forty-eight hours and, although not positively engaged, our patroling parties were heavy and our anxiety great. To make matters worse, we were on short rations. My headquarters had nothing in the camp chest and on Sancho Panza's principle that "he who sleeps, eats," my

officers and I had gone to bed, not only to rest, but to allay the pangs of hunger. About nine o'clock I was aroused by the quick, sharp challenge of the sentry: "Halt! Who comes there!"—followed by, "Advance, friend, and give the countersign!" I was lying on a bed of pine leaves under a fence rail shelter at the forks of the road. A moment later an orderly from Grant's headquarters handed me a small package with an envelope addressed in Grant's own hand. It inclosed a note running about as follows:

Brigadier General Wilson is hereby detailed to test and report upon Hosford's prepared rations, samples of which are herewith transmitted:

For three days preceding his tests, General Wilson will live off of the country through which he is marching, and during his tests he will live solely upon the rations herewith supplied. Having consumed the same, he will report his conclusions to these headquarters.

Inasmuch as I had not had a square meal for a week and the country in which we were operating had been swept clean of all food supplies, a fact which nobody knew better than Grant himself, I considered the order a grim piece of humor, but as I was half-famished, I proceeded at once to test the rations. They consisted of three desiccated, condensed, black meat biscuits, very much the size and color of a cake of shoeblacking, and of three half-pound packages of cracked wheat which had been toasted and slightly sweetened. I fell to immediately, finding the former impossible to masticate till broken into fragments and made into a stew, but the latter was palatable and refreshing from the first. On the whole the rations were so satisfactory

that I immediately made requisition for ten thousand, which, by the way, were never furnished, but I am sure they would have been most useful and acceptable to both officers and men engaged in raids or distant operations where the country was short of food. The next time I met the General we had a pleasant chat about the rations and my requisition for a supply of the same. The joke was on him and not on me.

But as the army was still operating by its left flank, there was no time for business outside of the usual. The next day Sheridan called upon me and later in the afternoon Dana rode over to learn how matters were going in our front. He remained to dinner and seemed to find the Hosford's prepared rations somewhat palatable, though hardly suitable for a steady diet. I had succeeded in adding hardtack, coffee, and bacon to the meal, all of which he found agreeable additions to what the General had contributed. It was a laughable episode, which well emphasized the conditions about us.

The next day Torbert's division took position on my left, filling the gap made by the gradual withdrawal of the infantry toward Cold Harbor. Heavy firing was continuous in that direction, and for two nights the cavalry kept constantly on the alert, but as the enemy disappeared and the cannonading grew more distant and more intermittent our men and horses gradually got rested.

During Sheridan's visit he informed me that he should soon start with two divisions to operate against the railroads north of Richmond, and this would leave me and my division to look after both the left and right of the army, which had been heav-

ily engaged for several days and had suffered great loss in its efforts to dislodge Lee from his position in front of the Chickahominy at Cold Harbor. Meanwhile, Sheridan, in carrying out his instructions, concentrated Torbert and Gregg at New Castle Ferry in our rear, leaving me to watch Grant's entire right as far around as the Pamunkey with one brigade, while the other was transferred to the left of the army, with instructions to cover the country to Jones' Bridge, on the Chickahominy. With my small force thus scattered, it was impossible to do more than keep watch and ward over the enemy's movements in either direction. It was work of observation and patrol. Pickets were posted and couriers were kept on the move in all directions and, although the division was watching a front of at least twenty-five miles, the enemy made no move which it did not discover. Fortunately for us, however, Lee was strictly on the defensive, and still more fortunately, perhaps, Sheridan's movement toward Gordonsville attracted Hampton's attention to his operations in that quarter.

While it is not my intention to comment upon Sheridan's operations, I cannot let them pass without calling attention to the insufficiency of his force and the futility of his efforts to break further the roads north of the James and by joining Hunter to cut off Lee's communications with Lynchburg. My destruction of the bridges over the South Anna and Little Rivers a few days before had so disabled the roads in that quarter they could not be used till the bridges were rebuilt. Sheridan's detachment, therefore, was premature and had no other immediate result than to draw Hampton after

him. Each of those great leaders had two divisions, and while the preponderance of strength was doubtless with Sheridan, his superiority of numbers was not sufficient to give him a ready victory over his opponent. They met in one of the bloodiest cavalry battles of that war at Trevillian Station, some sixty miles west of Cold Harbor, and while Sheridan always claimed a substantial victory,[1] it should be noted that he neither joined Hunter at Lynchburg, nor returned directly to the army, but made a wide detour to the northeast through Spottsylvania nearly as far north as Fredericksburg, and came back to the army by a circuitous or zigzag route through Bowling Green, Walkerton, King and Queen's Court House, and West Point to the White House. Near White House he found his way again obstructed by Hampton, who, moving on shorter lines, had again blocked his way. He finally pushed Hampton aside and rejoined the army, but this was with much heavy fighting and no substantial fruits of victory. Had my division been with Sheridan, or had his operations been delayed till the army was safely south of the James, when he could have united his three divisions, he might have been entirely successful. As it was, the advantages were really with Hampton, for he not only foiled Sheridan, but some days later fell upon me after I had gained a substantial success and gotten almost back to the Army of the Potomac. For some unexplained reason, neither Grant, Meade, nor Sheridan had yet grasped the importance of using cavalry *en*

[1] O. R. Serial No. 67, pp. 796, 797, but compare Hampton's report, pp. 1095-1098, describing operations and claiming a substantial victory over Sheridan.

masse against either the enemy's communications or his mounted forces.

Our experience at Yellow Tavern, where the whole corps was united or within close supporting distance for the first and only time, should have shown that; although only a part of our mounted troops were actually engaged, they were invincible with the whole united against any mounted force the enemy could put in the field. This was not only true then, but remained true till the end of the war, and the simple fact is that Grant deprived himself of two-thirds of his cavalry and dissipated its strength in a secondary, if not useless, operation north of Richmond, when united it would have been of incalculable value in covering his great turning movement to the south side of the James. As will be shown, my own operations with a single division at the same time were entirely successful in concealing Grant's march, but with the other two divisions present we might have demonstrated so strongly against Richmond as to convince Lee that that important point, rather than Petersburg, was our real objective.

From the 1st to the 12th of June the Army of the Potomac was almost constantly engaged in fighting at Cold Harbor the bloodiest battle of the campaign and gaining no decided result. As has been shown, my division had not only conformed to the movement by the left flank, but had done its full share in marching, skirmishing, and serious fighting. The transfer of Chapman's brigade to the aggressive flank of the army gave me an opportunity, while going to my new station, to call at Grant's headquarters and to confer with him and

with the staff, as well as with Meade and Humphreys, whom I found nearby. It was during this call that Meade warmly complimented and thanked me for the part I had so far played in the campaign and especially at Little River, Haw's Shop, and Via's House. I found him walking up and down in front of his tent, flecking his top-boots nervously with his riding whip. He knew my intimacy with Grant and my interest in his success, and, while he was cordial and unconventional in my reception, it was apparent that he was uneasy and not overconfident. This was shown by his comments on the course and costliness of the campaign up to that time, and especially by the question: "Wilson, when is Grant going to take Richmond?" To which I replied: "Whenever the generals and troops in this theater all work together to that end." Meade's question would not have been so noticeable but for his emphasis on Grant's name, and the impression thereby conveyed that it was Grant's special contract and not that of his subordinates and their forces, as well. It showed clearly that in his own mind, at least—and Meade was an able, loyal, and patriotic soldier—no honors had so far been gained that he thought worth claiming. At that juncture he was apparently willing Grant should have all the credit, along with all the responsibility.

At Grant's headquarters I found a different feeling, if not one of despondency. Grant himself, while neither cast down nor discouraged, evidently felt disappointed at his failure to overwhelm Lee, and especially at the failure of his subordinates to whom the details of carrying his general orders into effect were left, to select proper points, form

proper plans of attack, and, above all, to provide carefully for the contingency of success. He was then becoming conscious of the fact that his general orders, instead of being elaborated and conscientiously carried into effect, as they should have been, were far too frequently transmitted to those below, literally, without any special explanation whatever, and that the inevitable result would be to place the responsibility upon him. And this view of the matter was not only fully concurred in by Rawlins and others, but also by Dana, who represented and made hourly reports to the War Department.[1] This was not all, nor the worst. Both of those able and experienced men were disposed to hold Grant himself primarily responsible for the policy, if not for the practice, of making head-on attacks in the simple parallel order against the enemy's entrenched and almost impregnable positions. They concurred in regarding this policy as faulty and costly in the extreme. Both favored the flanking and turning movements which brought the army from Spottsylvania to Cold Harbor, and which, if not yet successful in giving it a decided victory, were gradually pressing the enemy back upon his base and capital, without unusual delay or excessive loss. They contended that this policy, though lacking in the element of brilliancy, would ultimately bring success, while they feared that the policy of the direct and continuous attack, if persisted in, would ultimately so decimate and discourage the rank and file that they could not be induced to face the enemy at all.

It was at this time that I first heard of that omi-

[1] O. R. Serial No. 67, pp. 63, 96.

nous and pathetic incident in which private soldiers of the fighting line at Cold Harbor wrote their names on pieces of paper and pinned them inside their coats, so that their dead bodies might be identified if they were killed in the attack.

Both Rawlins and Dana visited me the next day. Shortly after they arrived Warren, commanding the Fifth Corps, next to my right, put in his appearance and, while he had but little to say, it was quite apparent that he was far from happy or hopeful. As soon as he left, Rawlins and Dana resumed the account of affairs at headquarters. While they united in commending Grant's steadfastness and determination, they reiterated their disapproval of a certain baleful influence which had finally become paramount at Grant's headquarters. It was at this juncture that Rawlins, whose face, already pale and wan from disease, grew white with rage while he denounced the influence of Colonel Comstock, Grant's chief engineer in the campaign and siege of Vicksburg and now attached to the Lieutenant General's personal staff.[1] That officer, he declared, with blenched lips, glittering teeth, and flashing eyes, having won Grant's confidence, was now leading him and his army to ruin by senselessly advocating the direct attack, and driving it home by the deadly reiteration of "Smash 'em up! Smash 'em up!"

As I had no sympathy with that bloody and futile policy, it gave me special pleasure to assure Rawlins of my willingness to assist him, not only in

[1] O. R. Serial No. 60, p. 1019, Babcock to W. F. Smith: "I would send your letter to Wilson, but I am sure Comstock has more influence than he (Wilson)."

getting it set aside, but in getting a better one adopted in its place. Thereupon, he and Dana urged me to return to the staff, on the plea that no one could fill the place I had previously held, and there was no one in whose judgment Grant had so much confidence as he had in mine. While greatly flattered by this invitation, I called attention to the fact that I was the junior brigadier general in that army and could not give up one command nor take another without positive orders. I declared my willingness to obey any order that might be issued by competent authority, no matter where it might take me nor what it might cost. With that assurance I urged Rawlins to assert and stand by his own opinions as he had always done in the great emergencies of Grant's life, adding that if he needed help at any time, he might call upon me with the assurance that I would go to his assistance on the shortest notice.

I do not know what passed after that between Grant and Rawlins in reference to methods of operation, but it is certain that the "smash-'em-up" policy was abandoned about that time and was never again favored at headquarters. Grant was naturally a reticent man, somewhat slow to show a change of mind even after reaching the conclusion that a change was necessary, but he was far from being blind to the practical lessons of experience or deaf to the voice of his subordinates, however expressed. He was as quick as any general to perceive from unsatisfactory results the necessity for changing his policies and plans, and it is but fair to allow that he required no argument after Cold Harbor to convince him that he should resume the practice of flanking the enemy rather than attack-

ing his entrenchments head-on without the aid of heavy and well-directed columns or without patient preparation for support and success.

Certain it is that for the time he abandoned the direct attack of fortified positions, and, while his movements thenceforth were not always properly correlated and therefore not always victorious, they were, with few exceptions, much safer and far less costly than they had formerly been.

It is to be observed that Cold Harbor marked an interesting epoch in Grant's career. It was properly the end of the Overland campaign, which had lasted about thirty days, during which the army had been constantly marching and fighting. Its losses had been greater than for any similar period of its existence. Its courage and constancy had been tested to the utmost, and, while it had gained no complete victory, it moved forward with varying and inconclusive results something over eighty miles, but at last it had become painfully apparent that its fighting impulse had been greatly diminished. It was as though the loss of blood it poured out so freely was distinctly lowering its fighting temper and decreasing its confidence of success. These general facts were freely admitted by all observant participants, and, while the younger and more aggressive generals, such as Upton, Ames, Barlow, and McKenzie, had noted with unerring instinct the mistakes of their superiors, Upton, more bold than the rest, gave vent to his feelings in language now within the reach of all. On June 4 he wrote:

. . . I am disgusted with the generalship displayed. Our men have in many instances been foolishly and wan-

tonly sacrificed. Assault after assault has been ordered upon the enemy's entrenchments, when those ordering them knew nothing about the strength or the position of the enemy. Thousands of lives might have been spared by the exercise of a little skill; but, as it is, the courage of our men is expected to obviate all difficulties. I must confess that so long as I see such incompetency there is no grade in the army to which I do not aspire. . . .

The next day he added:

We are now at Cold Harbor, where we have been since June 1. On that day we had a murderous engagement. I say "murderous" because we were recklessly ordered to assault the enemy's entrenchments, knowing neither their strength nor position. Our loss was very heavy and to no purpose. Our men are brave, but cannot accomplish impossibilities. My brigade lost about three hundred men. My horse was killed, but I escaped unharmed. . . .

I am very sorry to say I have seen but little generalship during the campaign. Some of our corps commanders are not fit to be corporals. Lazy and indifferent, they will not even ride along their lines; yet, without hesitancy, they will order us to attack the enemy, no matter what their position or numbers. Twenty thousand of our killed and wounded should to-day be in our ranks, but I will cease fault finding and express the hope that mere numbers will yet enable us to enter Richmond.[1]

It was in this spirit that Generals Smith and Rawlins talked at that time, and there can be no doubt that the real fighting men of the army held the views which Upton so fearlessly and feelingly expressed. Years afterward he confirmed these views in his work on the "Military Policy of the United States." Fortunately, Grant took warning

[1] "Life and Letters of Emory Upton," Appleton & Co., p. 108, *et seq.*

before it was too late, and, no matter under what influences, changed his practice and pursued thenceforth a more prudent course. In this he had not only the approval of the army, but the thanks of the country whose cause it so steadfastly upheld.

It has often been observed that American soldiers, both regular and volunteers, are unusually intelligent men who learn their duty rapidly and soon come to observe, consider, and pass judgment on the plans and combinations of their leaders with unerring precision. It has also been observed that the general who does not read success or failure in the faces of his men as soon as the combinations are well under way is unworthy to lead them. It was greatly to Grant's credit that he always regarded our soldiers "as smart as town folks," and when he pushed them beyond their powers he did not fail to recognize it and had no hesitation either in changing his plan or in adopting some other less bloody and more certain to lead to victory.

XVIII

THE CAMPAIGN SOUTH OF THE JAMES

Crossing the Chickahominy—Charles City Court House—Saint Mary's Church—Parker the Indian—Covering the rear—Crossing the James—Visit from Dana and Rawlins—Prince George Court House—Operations against Weldon, Danville and Southside Railroads—Destruction of railroads—Return from Staunton River—Sapony Creek—Reams Station—Failure of Sheridan and the infantry to keep door open.

Having failed to dislodge Lee from his entrenchments at Cold Harbor, Grant now determined to flank him out of them, and, after passing the Chickahominy, instead of advancing directly on Richmond he decided to make a flank march and then, after crossing the James, to throw himself upon Petersburg. To make this movement sure, he detached Smith with the movable part of Butler's army by transport to Bermuda Hundred, near the mouth of the Appomattox, to march rapidly against Petersburg. This was, also, to cover the operations of the forces under Grant's immediate command.

In the movement to the James River, my division, the only cavalry left with the army, was assigned to the duty of covering both its front and

rear. On June 7, under definite instructions from Grant to unite with Hunter and return with him to the Army of the Potomac,[1] Sheridan crossed the Pamunkey at New Castle and, turning west between the North and the South Anna on the 12th, fought the drawn battle of Trevillian Station, after which he retreated by a circuitous route to the northeast as far as Spottsylvania Court House, thence southeast and south to White House on the York River, and finally to Douthat's Landing, or Windmill Point, on the James. He was absent three weeks and, for all purposes connected with Grant's operations against Lee's army and the bases covered by it, he was just as completely out of the real theater of operations as he would have been had he gone north of the Potomac. This was no fault of his, but, inasmuch as he was followed off by the most of Hampton's cavalry, supported in turn by infantry, his success or failure from first to last necessarily had but little effect on the general campaign. As before stated, Hampton had the short lines on him, till he reached White House, whether Richmond or Petersburg was considered as the base, and was, therefore, able to anticipate, if not to defeat, him at every turn of his operations.[2]

Meanwhile my division was constantly marching and skirmishing from the time the forward movement began, on the night of June 12, by the way of the Long Bridge. The passage of the Chickahominy was made after nightfall, as previously described. The whole of the next day was passed in heavy skir-

[1] O. R. Serial No. 70, pp. 593, 598, 626, 651. See also Serial No. 67, p. 795.

[2] O. R. Serial No. 81, p. 231.

mishing, with but little, if any, support from the infantry. It was a period of extraordinary anxiety and hard work, during which much ammunition was expended and much noise made between White Oak Swamp and Malvern Hill, Philip's Plantation, and Nance's Shop. On June 14 we bivouacked near Charles City Court House, having gone there to replenish ammunition. This done, both brigades turned toward Lee and resumed the offensive with severe fighting and the loss of fifty-odd men, killed, wounded, and missing. But my observations satisfied me that Lee was moving not so much to interpose between Grant and the river as to cover Richmond and protect his own crossing of the James later at Drury's and Chapin's Bluffs. St. Mary's Church and its vicinity were for the next forty-eight hours the scene of about as much active cavalry work as took place in so contracted a space at any time during the war, and it was doubtless on account of that activity that Lee, with his cavalry following Sheridan, completely lost touch with Grant's army, and failed for two days at least to detect his plans or to foresee his destination.[1]

As the senior cavalry officer present, I was constantly in close touch with both Grant and Meade as well as with Rawlins and Dana during this period, which practically ended June 20, when my division, having crossed the river at Douthat's Landing, was about ready to begin operations against the railroads south of the James. While at St. Mary's Church, Parker, the Indian chief, one of Grant's staff, joined me, somewhat under the influence of liquor, and asked me for a squadron of cav-

[1] O. R. Serial No. 80, p. 20; Serial No. 81, pp. 659, 662, 667.

alry. As we were good friends, and he was ordinarily a man of dignified behavior and fine military instincts, I received his request with amiability, assuring him that if properly authorized he should have anything he called for. Thereupon I asked what he wanted with a squadron, to which he replied that he intended to go out, find General Lee, who would not be closely guarded, capture, and bring him in as a prisoner to General Grant's headquarters. Fortunately, his credentials were insufficient and hence I turned him off with a laugh, but the captain was by no means disposed to take my refusal as a joke, though he finally yielded to my decision.

By 4 A. M. on Friday, June 17, the entire army, with all its trains and stragglers, having completed its crossing of the James, I withdrew my pickets and transferred my entire division by the floating bridge to the south side of the river and went into camp near the Black Water. We spent the next two or three days in resting and feeding, and furbishing up our arms and equipments. On Saturday I visited army headquarters and on Sunday, the 19th, Rawlins and Dana made me a return visit. The army had taken position in front of Petersburg without accident or delay, but otherwise its success had been merely strategical. Smith's movements, intended as a *coup-de-main,* had resulted in the capture of the enemy's outworks, south and east of the town, but, failing to receive prompt and proper support, Smith did not push home his advantage, although he had the cover of darkness. Owing partly to defective staff arrangements, but still more to a lack of definite instruction to Meade and Hancock to support and coöperate with him, his movement was

an abortive one. Smith himself moved cautiously and slowly, and while Hancock came on the ground before nightfall and offered his help all movements were too uncertain and too torpid to command the success which should have otherwise crowned Smith's operations before Lee occupied the entrenchments covering the town in force. I have never doubted that this was due primarily to the defective staff arrangements, already pointed out. Had Grant been in direct personal command of all the coöperating columns without the intervention of others, or had it been customary at that time that all details should be framed and supervised from his own headquarters instead of leaving those for the Army of the Potomac to Meade and his staff, for the Army of the James to Butler and his subordinates, and for the Ninth Corps to the loyal but inefficient Burnside, the plan of campaign must have been far more coherent and far more successful.[1] While it cannot be asserted that Petersburg would certainly have fallen, there is good reason for agreeing with the subsequent declarations of Meade and Hancock that Petersburg would have fallen had they known that that result was expected.

But whatever may have caused the failure of Smith's movement or wherein that movement could have been bettered, both Rawlins and Dana were most unhappy over it when they came to my camp. They concurred in the declaration that the army was far too disjointed in its organization and in the coöperation of its various parts, and far too sluggish in its aggressive movements. They again expressed the wish that I should return to headquar-

[1] See Wilson's "Life of William Farrar Smith," p. 85 *et seq.*

ters for the purpose of helping to regulate and "push things." This was most flattering, and I was too anxious to help to the utmost of my ability to positively decline, but I pointed out, as I had done a fortnight before, that my duty was to serve wherever placed, while leaving those in authority over me to determine where and in what capacity that should be.

Whether Rawlins and Dana fully represented Grant or brought my reply to his attention I never knew, but the next morning I received orders to report at Meade's headquarters. When there he directed me, in pursuance of instructions from Grant, to get ready for an active campaign against the Danville and Southside Railroads,[1] and asked me when I could take the field with my own division reënforced by Kautz, my old assistant at the Cavalry Bureau, with a small division of two thousand men belonging to the Army of the James. Having answered that I could start early on June 22, and having received verbal instructions accordingly I rode on to Grant's headquarters at City Point, where Rawlins informed me that it had been decided to relieve Warren from command of the Fifth Corps if a suitable officer could be found to take his place. Thereupon I recommended Sheridan in terms as strong as I could frame, and both Rawlins and Dana agreed that he was the best man in the army for the detail, but on reflection they came to the conclusion that he could not be spared from the cavalry for the special reason that I, whom they would recommend to succeed him, had not sufficient rank for the position. It will be remembered that

[1] O. R. Serial No. 81, pp. 232, 234, 256, 257.

I was still the junior brigadier general of the cavalry corps, and had not yet been confirmed by the Senate.[1] The changes, as far as they might affect me, were therefore clearly out of the question. Matters were, however, moving rapidly. Cheerful and willing officers were in great demand. My two brigade commanders, Colonels McIntosh and Chapman, had fully won their stars and, before I took my leave, Grant promised that both should have them.

Here it may be remarked that no man ever commanded an army who was more generous to his subordinates or more anxious to promote them when worthy of it than Grant, but the most he could do in such cases was to secure advancement for the colonels who deserved it to brevet brigadier generals, on which there was no limit. No American general ever had the right by law to promote his subordinates on the field. Occasionally in cases of extreme necessity or as a reward for extraordinary services a general exercised that privilege, but it was always subject to the approval of the Secretary of War and the President, who were in turn subject to the laws enacted by Congress.

The next day Kautz reported at Prince George Court House with his so-called division, amounting in fact to nothing more than a small and poorly organized brigade of about two thousand men for duty, which went into camp near by. The day was a busy one, for there was much to be done in the way of issuing supplies and delayed clothing, but

[1] O. R. Serial No. 68, p. 746, Stanton to Grant reports my confirmation as having been made by the Senate. Serial No. 82, p. 176, Stanton reports Senate adjourned without my confirmation and that I had been reappointed from date of original appointment.

everybody was anxious to do all in his power to make our expedition a success. All regarded it as an important one, though it required us to cut loose from the army and to swing straight out into the Confederacy against the railroads connecting Petersburg and Richmond with Lynchburg, as well as with Danville and Weldon in the interior of the South. These were the only railroads south of the James by which supplies could reach Lee's army, and it was believed that, if they were thoroughly broken and destroyed, Lee could no longer feed his troops and would therefore be forced to evacuate those strongholds and take to the open country. An examination of the maps will show that the operation entrusted to me with five thousand five hundred men was one of the first magnitude and importance.[1] My column should, therefore, have been made as strong as possible. It was known that on the evening of June 20 Sheridan had got back to within supporting distance of the army and that a few days' delay would enable him to reunite the entire cavalry corps of not less than twelve thousand men for duty.[2]

Meade, as we shall see, favored this view,[3] but Grant, while willing to strengthen me by part of Kautz's command, thought it best not to wait. The night before starting, I received my written orders.[4] They gave me all the latitude required with such preliminary assurances as I asked for. They especially authorized me, in case I found it impracti-

[1] O. R. Serial No. 81, p. 257.
[2] O. R. Serial No. 81, pp. 237, 255.
[3] O. R. Serial No. 81, pp. 232, 234, 267, 268.
[4] O. R. Serial No. 81, pp. 285-6.

cable to retrace my steps, to cross the Carolinas and join Sherman in Georgia or wherever else I might find him. I went over the entire project with Humphreys, the chief-of-staff, but on full consideration of the case and of the obvious disadvantage it would be to the army to have so large a part of its cavalry permanently detached, I wrote him, as soon as I received my written instructions, that I had no doubt of my ability to carry out my orders and fully destroy the enemy's railroads, but that it might be necessary for many reasons to return from the Staunton or Roanoke River and in that case I should have a hard time unless the country roads to the rear were kept open and Sheridan were required to follow Hampton wherever he might go. To this Humphreys replied in substance that I need have no apprehension, that the army would extend its left to and across the Weldon Railroad the next day and soon after across the southside road to the Appomattox River, thus covering all the roads south of Petersburg to the interior of the country. This, with the further assurance that Sheridan would be required to follow Hampton wherever he went, put my mind entirely at rest. This understanding was confirmed that night by Humphreys to Captain Whitaker, my aid-de-camp, and later by Meade to Grant.

With the assurance which all this fully justified I completed my arrangements as rapidly as possible. Leaving the Third New Jersey and the Eighteenth Pennsylvania Cavalry with a total of one thousand one hundred and forty-six men behind to guard the trains and for such other service as might be required, I took the road at 3 A. M. on

June 22, with Kautz's force and my own division of two brigades, the first under Colonel John B. McIntosh and the second under Colonel George H. Chapman, amounting in all to about five thousand five hundred men and horses. I also had two regular batteries of six guns each, all marching from Mount Sinai Church near Prince George Court House by the road leading to Reams Station on the Weldon Railroad, just twelve miles distant.

A standing rule in the division required that the leading brigade commander, with his head of column, should start exactly on time, and if he did not, no matter for what reason, the next brigade commander should take the road at the minute and have it for the day. An hour or so before the time set, Colonel McIntosh requested that the first brigade might delay starting long enough to issue clothing which had just been received. As the weather was both hot and dry, I declined to grant the permission and directed him to leave his clothing with the division train behind the army. But much to my surprise when I took the road I found McIntosh issuing clothing, whereupon Chapman instantly took the lead and I seized the opportunity to lecture McIntosh severely. He was both an active and a gallant officer, but in the severest tones I could command I told him that I could not overlook his disobedience and under ordinary circumstances should relieve him from command and send him to the rear in arrest. He seemed greatly astonished as well as hurt but, like the good soldier he was, he made no reply whatever. The incident turned out to be a fortunate one, for every officer in the division soon heard of

it, and McIntosh above all never after that failed to give instant obedience to the orders sent him. Within the limits of his abilities and opportunities he was as good a brigade commander as the army ever had in it, and from that day we became fast friends.

From Reams Station the "Wilson" road led us northwest to Sixteen-mile Turnout on the Southside Railroad, which we struck about 2 P. M. without meeting any resistance whatever. The direction and boldness of our movement were evidently a surprise to the Confederates. Fortunately we found two loaded freight trains at the station, disabled the two engines, burned sixteen cars of army supplies, the station, wood piles, water tank, sawmill and, besides, tore up the tracks and the sleepers, piled up the crossties, and burned them, which, in turn, heated the rails so that they were bent easily around the trees. We then turned southwestward and followed the railroad till midnight, burning every wood pile, station, water tank, section house, and bridge and, as before, bending the rails by the method we had found so efficacious. The weather was dry and exceedingly hot, the country level and without streams, the forests full of withered leaves, the roads dusty, and the sun beating down with a blistering intensity. But, withal, the men worked to the best of their ability. Both men and horses bivouacked that night dirty, hungry, tired, and almost worn out, but success had made everybody enthusiastic and confident. We had met nothing except here and there a picket that fled on our approach, but shortly after passing Reams Station, the rear brigade, covering our operations, was at-

tacked by W. H. F. Lee's cavalry and sharp skirmishing followed till darkness put an end to it.

At one the next morning Kautz started as rapidly as possible to Burkeville Junction, at the crossing of two railroads, which he was to destroy effectively in all directions. It was thought that my division, between him and the enemy, would enable him to carry on the work of destruction till finished, and this was done with commendable success. But one or two of his impatient or careless colonels, under the burning sun, did not do their work as well as they should have done. The Third Division, however, completed the destruction in every case, and then marched through Nottaway Court House to the Burkeville and Danville Railroad, farther south. In this way we broke the railroads at so many points as to entirely disable them for an indefinite period. The hot weather favored us, for it made buildings, crossties, bridges, trestles, wood piles, cars, and stations so dry and inflammable that they burned like tinder, filling the air with clouds of cinders and smoke, and setting fire to the dry leaves and grass on both sides of the track.

After leaving the Southside-Lynchburg Railroad we forded the Nottaway, and passing through a dense forest recrossed it near Nottaway Station, where we again met the enemy shortly after noon. A sharp fight ensued with W. H. F. Lee's cavalry, but as it was in heavy woods we were satisfied with holding the field till we heard that Kautz had succeeded at Burkeville and was approaching Meherrin Station, where I figured on forming a junction with him. For nine hours we had heavy skirmishing and fighting, during which we captured the enemy's

guns, and after disabling them abandoned them to fall again into his hands. My staff and I were constantly exposed. Captain Andrews had a lock cut from his beard and one shoulder strap knocked off. Captain Sayles, of Rhode Island, was killed carrying an order to an outlying detachment. He was a most promising officer, young, handsome, gallant, and debonair, and his loss was a great sorrow to his companions, but such is the priceless tribute a country often pays for its liberties and its institutions.

Leaving our bivouac on the field, we formed a junction with Kautz by ten o'clock the next day, and this gave us an ample force with which to continue the work of destruction.

The 25th was our fourth day out, and we passed it in systematic destruction and in fighting off the enemy as we had done for the three previous days. Kautz, now in advance, pushed on rapidly, brushing the hostile pickets out of the way, while my division, with one brigade under cover of the other, burned the depot at Drake's and the bridge at Mossing Ford, as well as all the mills along the line, several of which were sawing timbers at the time for the railroad. Every depot, turntable, freight car, wood pile, water tank, bridge, and trestle from Sixteen Mile Turnout to the Staunton River was effectively destroyed, and as far as we knew neither materials nor machinery were left for their repair. It was the best job of the kind I ever saw, and as I afterward learned from General J. M. St. John, the Confederate officer in charge of military railroads, it was the heaviest blow of the kind that ever befell the Confederacy till Appomattox wiped it out

forever. He added that with all the resources at his command it was nine weeks, or sixty-three days, before a train from the south ran into Petersburg on either road.

At two o'clock on June 25 Kautz reached Roanoke Station, near the Staunton River, and immediately advanced to the attack, hoping to force his way through a bottom wheatfield covering the northern end of the bridge and set it on fire. But, unfortunately, the enemy concentrated all his available force within his entrenchments south of the bridge, and, by the help of six guns at close range, swept the bridge from end to end, as well as the fields and roads over which we were trying to pass. The militia of eight counties, with a well-drilled company from Danville, were so effectively covered that we could not get closer than seventy-five yards. The place was found to be impregnable.

The wheat was so high and the sun so hot that many men fainted, and as the river was wide and deep, with neither fords nor highway bridges at hand, after a careful reconnoissance under a counter fire from our field guns I decided to give up trying to carry or turn the defenses, and to take the back track as soon after dark as possible. The very contingency I foresaw had arisen, and the only question left was: Should we find the roads open or closed as we approached our own army?

My division, with the best troops, had been engaged all day tearing up the railroad, burning buildings, and fighting off the enemy. Our route from Prince George Court House to Burkeville was almost due west from Petersburg, about fifty miles, and from Burkeville southwest to the Staunton

River about thirty-five miles further. The map shows that our operations had been straight out toward the heart of the Confederacy, and, as we could go no farther, there was nothing left but to "get back" as fast as possible.

The strategic advantages were, henceforth, decidedly with the Confederates, who were now free not only to concentrate the whole of their cavalry but to reënforce it with as much infantry as they might think necessary. They boldly continued to press us till after dark, but Chapman, who commanded the rear that day, succeeded, without much loss, in holding them at bay till further offensive operations were impossible. Both forces slept on their arms without unsaddling. Fortunately the country was well supplied with horses, grain, forage, bacon, fowls, eggs, and corn meal, but, withal, it was an anxious time for us all. I had not only to choose my route and bring off my wounded, but make my way rapidly toward our army through the forest and small farms which covered the intervening country. It was, of course, almost impossible to return by the road I had come out on, and, looking over my maps, I concluded that my best chances lay due east through Wyliesville, Christianaville, and Greensborough, toward Jarratt's Station on the Petersburg and Weldon Railroad. After resting, feeding, and caring for our horses and for our wounded, of whom we now had something like two hundred in ambulances and country carriages, we silently took the road at midnight, passing noiselessly under the enemy's guns not over four hundred yards away, and pushed on till daylight, when we found ourselves at Wyliesville with no enemy in

sight. He had lost our trail completely, but doubtless realizing that we should endeavor to rejoin Grant's army he took the shortest road west and north of us to his own supports, leaving us to follow the road we had chosen without meeting anything but scouting parties. We again rested, and, after making coffee, continued our march without pause till five o'clock that afternoon, when we encamped on Buckhorn Creek in Mecklinburg County. Before daylight the next day we were again on the march, crossing the Meherrin at Saffold's Bridge, and continuing eastward to Poplar Mountain and to the Nottaway River, which we crossed at the Double Bridges near the mouth of Hardwood Creek at noon on the 28th. It was a wild, poor country, mostly forest, broken here and there by small clearings. But few people were about, none, indeed, except negroes, from whom we learned that the enemy had a small force of infantry at Stony Creek Depot, supported by two small detachments of cavalry. As the direct road from Double Bridges to Prince George Court House passes two miles west of Stony Creek Depot, and as the country farther east was still more intricate and unknown, I sent a small detachment to clear the way for the main column. A sharp fight ensued in the vicinity of the Depot, in which we were at first successful, but we soon found the resistance so sharp as to indicate clearly that Hampton was in our front. This was soon confirmed by the capture of prisoners from his various organizations, who told us that Hampton had dropped Sheridan a few days before near White House, north of the James, and was now in front of us with his whole corps to dispute our farther

march northward. It was now dark, and a fierce fight ensued with alternating charge and countercharge till nearly midnight without either side gaining any substantial advantage. It was evident, however, that we were up against a sufficient force to hold both the railroad and the Stony Creek bridges. So far as we could learn, there were no fords in the neighborhood.

This made it necessary to turn the position by the left or right, and, as our maps indicated smaller streams and better roads north toward Reams Station than northeast toward Prince George, I took Kautz from the fighting line and sent him to the left with directions to force his way by the first available crossroad to Reams Station, while my own division would hold Hampton in its front till I could see to follow the roads on which Kautz had marched. This made it necessary to confront Hampton till daylight, and with intermittent charge and countercharge it was a night of unusual peril and excitement. The enemy, feeling that he had us in the toils, made three successive attacks on our dismounted line nearly a mile long. I lay with my staff in the edge of a cleared field personally watching and directing the defense. Of course, we got no sleep, and when a courier came about daylight with a dispatch from Kautz saying that the road was clear to Reams Station, I withdrew all the men except a rear guard, remounted, and pushed rapidly to the left and north. This movement was successfully begun and successfully ended, but as the rear guard made some noise in withdrawing, the enemy sallied out in force. Still the movement was not interrupted, for Chapman, who conducted it, dis-

played his usual steadiness and skill. He fell, however, into great personal peril, owing to the fact that he was near-sighted, and came near being captured while hunting for his horse. But he succeeded in extricating himself and rejoining me before we reached Reams Station. Here the whole force was reunited in order of battle, well in hand, by ten o'clock of the 29th.

Kautz had reached there at seven that morning and made a sharp dash at the Station, where he encountered Mahone's Confederate division, capturing fifty or sixty prisoners. But this was a great surprise, for according to our understanding a week before we counted on finding our own army and not the enemy at that place. We had had no word from headquarters since we left, but after a hasty conference with Kautz and a rapid reconnoissance along the front, I became satisfied that no part of the Army of the Potomac was on the railroad in that region, but, on the contrary, Reams Station was occupied in force by the enemy. A division of Confederate infantry was in our front, lying down in battle order with artillery in position to sweep both the roads and the fields which separated us. My whole command was, however, well in hand with guns, wagons, ambulances, and wounded men in their proper places, but as they had been marching, fighting, and tearing up railroads night and day for a week in the hottest weather, during which they had rested at no time more than six hours, both men and horses were well nigh exhausted. The enemy's cavalry lay in plain sight to the left and front on the Petersburg road.[1] To make the situation still more des-

[1] O. R. Serial No. 80, pp. 632, 633, see sketch map.

perate, we saw reënforcements deliberately going into position on the field. It was a discouraging outlook. The morning was clear, hot, dry, and silent. Everything seemed at peace except the forces gathering for battle. The prospect, which was bad to start with, was rapidly growing worse. Judging the night before, from the absence of news as well as from the strength of the enemy, that our road back to the army had not only not been kept open but that no part of our army was near at hand, I had already detached the gallant Captain Whitaker of my staff with an escort of forty troopers, commanded by Lieutenant R. L. Ford, Third New York Cavalry, half of whom were lost in the dash,[1] to make his way as rapidly as possible to army headquarters, to report our near approach, and to ask that the necessary measures should be taken promptly to open the road for us. When it is remembered that Meade's headquarters in the rear of his army were at that hour within eight miles of Reams Station, that the enemy had practically to march around his left flank in order to put himself across our road, that there had been plenty of artillery firing that morning, and that the dashing and fearless Whitaker broke his way through the enemy's lines to army headquarters by ten o'clock, it will be seen that, in spite of their prior neglect, those in authority must have had ample notice to send either cavalry or infantry or both to our assistance, and that their failure to do so was, under the rules, entirely inexplicable.

They had apparently forgotten our existence as well as their assurances that the army would cross

[1] O. R. Serial No. 81, p. 492.

the Weldon road the day after I left, and the Southside road soon after, and that Sheridan would follow Hampton wherever he might go. It is now known that Grant's first efforts [1] to seize the Weldon road were foiled, and that he did not succeed in reaching it till August 23,[2] and finally that he did not reach the Southside Railroad for nearly a year afterward. But how or why the operations, which carried me fully one hundred miles into the interior to the great peril of my command, had been forgotten is past my understanding. The puzzle becomes all the greater when it is recalled that Meade's outposts detected and reported the movement of both rebel cavalry and infantry toward the left and rear of his army several days before we got back to Reams Station, and the only notice taken of the report was an order to those concerned to look out for a rebel raid against our herds and train.

As all communication between my column and army headquarters was suspended from June 22 to June 29, I was in absolute ignorance of Grant's failure and of Sheridan's defeat, while both Meade and Grant were without anything more reliable in regard to my movements and fortunes than the rumors which reached them through the "reliable contrabands" of the country. What had actually taken place I could not even guess. While it is inconceivable that the probability or even the necessity of my return to the army should have been forgotten, I

[1] See Serial No. 81, p. 685. Lee to Seddon, June 24, 1864.

[2] Reached, crossed and held firmly after August 23, 1864. See Meade, O. R. Serial No. 87, p. 31. Also Grant, Serial No. 95, p. 20, and Serial No. 87, p. 19. Also Serial No. 88, pp. 1194, 1198, 1199.

found the doors not only closed but strongly barred by the enemy.

Discouraging as the outlook was, however, I literally hoped for Sheridan or night to help us out of our straits before the enemy could begin his attack. Firing an occasional gun and displaying as much deliberation and confidence in posting my batteries and forming my cavalry for vigorous action as did Hampton, Lee, and Mahone in fronting me, I felt that our army could not be far away and that my duty was to gain as much time as possible to permit Meade to send troops to my assistance. Unfortunately, however, I did not even know that our army was still in front of Petersburg, though I felt that if it had been driven back the news would probably have reached me through the country people. With great deliberation I therefore got everything ready either to attack or to begin the retreat. I had decided to make a mounted charge in brigade columns and had given orders accordingly, when two of my most trusted and experienced officers remonstrated. They urged that the enemy's line was entirely too strong to justify a hope of breaking through it with tired cavalry and advised that we should again swing out into the Confederacy and work our way by a wide circuit to the rear of our army. This was the plan I adopted, though I waited till after one o'clock before beginning to put it into effect. I had early issued all the ammunition the troops could carry, and ordered the destruction of our wagons and caissons, so that in any event we might travel as light as possible.

By one o'clock all arrangements were completed, and shortly afterward our leading column swung

out by the stage road and the Double Bridges for the south side of the Nottaway River. But the enemy was not idle. While our front was diminishing by withdrawals from the flanks the rebels started to our left for the purpose of taking it in reverse. The situation was becoming perilous, but Fitzhugh's rapid fire, the sound of which reached our army, delayed the rebel movement till McIntosh got entirely strung out and clear of the field. This was between two and three o'clock.

Kautz, on the right, undertook to follow the general course marked out for the retreat, but, soon finding himself with no enemy near or between him and the railroad, he turned to the east and made his way through the forest without molestation to the rear of our army, where he arrived that night, and was, of course, entirely safe. Two regiments and over a third of his men got separated from him and, rejoining my column, remained with it till the campaign ended.[1] Shortly after recrossing the Rowanty, I received word directly from Kautz that he was traveling parallel with me and would endeavor to rejoin the column, but, failing in that, would rejoin the army by some other route. This is what he did, and, as he was not pursued, he suffered no further loss. As soon as he got into camp and regained his breath, he gave out an overdrawn account of our desperate straits which Dana telegraphed to the War Department.[2] The fear of our capture spread rapidly through the army, but General Grant, a few days later, assured me he had not at any time believed it, that he was sure I would be a hard man to capture, and that I would certainly

[1] O. R. Serial No. 80, p. 29. [2] O. R. Serial No. 81, pp. 580-581.

turn up with my command substantially intact in some unexpected quarter.

As our retreat was well under way by three o'clock and the road to the rear was entirely clear, we were subject to no further annoyances that day but the loss of a few stragglers, though the command suffered for food and forage and from the loss of sleep, which it so much needed. While recrossing Stony Creek the enemy charged our rear guard, and for a time it looked as though the main column could not pass the defile at the bridge without material loss. McIntosh, however, covered the operation in a masterly manner, and although we thought it best, because the artillery horses were exhausted, to spike our guns later and throw them into the river we succeeded in crossing the Double Bridges and reaching Jarratt's Station on the railroad shortly after two o'clock the next morning. Here we rested for two hours without unsaddling or making camp, during which time we got new guides and prepared to push on toward the east. Starting again at dawn by a wood road we reached Peters Bridge near Littleton and recrossed the Nottaway to the eastward at 1 P. M. on June 30. Fortunately, the country, although thinly settled, had paid but little tribute to the war. It had a fair amount of supplies for both man and beast, and, although the troopers were worn out by fatigue and loss of sleep, they soon gathered in all the food and forage necessary. Resting only four hours we began the march again at nightfall, making our way northeast toward the Blackwater at Blunt's Bridge, where our guides informed us we should either find a standing bridge or a passable ford.

That night march was the most trying and exasperating one in which I ever took part. The country was covered almost the entire distance between the Nottaway and the Blackwater by an unbroken forest, in which the trees were large and the underbrush at many places almost impenetrable. The roads were obscure and difficult to follow, and consequently our progress was slow. The columns halted frequently and, as soon as halted, the troopers would fall asleep in their saddles, and in the blackness of the forest it was always difficult to find where the halt had occurred or to learn what caused it. Flankers were of course kept well out in the direction from which the enemy might be expected, and shortly after dark they captured a few prisoners from Hampton's advance, moving down the Jerusalem plank road in a direction squarely crossing our column. My own orderly, Private Chance, of the Second Ohio Cavalry, had obtained permission to join the flankers for the purpose of getting a remount to replace his played-out horse. About ten o'clock that night he rejoined me with two prisoners, who had at first surprised and captured him in a farmer's stable yard, but in the darkness they failed to discover his revolver which, in those days, the self-confident orderly generally carried thrust down his boot leg. The captors, who were in a hurry and not over-scrupulous as to the practices of cavalrymen, required him to mount his stolen horse and take the road with them. As was the good-natured practice of the times, the three troopers soon became interested in each other, and, as my orderly was not slow to discover that they belonged to the advance guard of Hampton's cavalry,

which could not be far behind, he watched for his opportunity, and, when he caught both in front and in range, drew his revolver and not only compelled them in turn to surrender but to hurry with him to my headquarters.

Fortunately for us, the prisoners were bright, intelligent young fellows, who talked freely, doubtless on the theory that we should draw but little consolation from the information they might impart. As it turned out, however, they confirmed what had already reached me from other sources, and this caused us to quicken our march as much as possible, so as to cross the plank road and reach the Blackwater before the enemy. Still more fortunately, however, Hampton was not aware of his advantage nor of our exhausted condition, and therefore, although he had the radius while we were moving on the arc of the circle, he failed to intercept us.

But our troubles were not yet at an end. Although I reached the Blackwater just after midnight, where the entire command, covered by a strong rear guard, soon joined me, but, instead of finding a passable bridge, I found the burned and blackened ruins of one, and, instead of a ford, a river apparently wide and deep enough to float the *Great Eastern*. It was a dark and dismal scene in the midst of a river bottom crowded with forest trees clad with festoons of black hanging moss and resounding with the hooting of distant owls and the baying of distant dogs. But it was no time for discouragement by difficulties in front or by dangers in rear. I had built many military bridges in my day, but was now face to face with a problem such

as I had never met before. Hitherto, my task had been to get an advancing army across in pursuit of one trying to get away. Now the conditions were reversed, and it was my task to build a bridge which would carry my own retreating command to a place of safety on the other side of a river dividing two military zones.

Providentially the center trestle was standing, but there was absolutely no bridge material at hand except two string pieces, one of which, half burned through, we used with the other as a connection over which a man with a steady head might make his way to the farther side of the stream. With these two beams as platform and directrix, I had a passable structure ready in less than an hour. I had promptly taken in the situation, and sent men into the forest to cut four young pine trees of the proper length, which were soon in position, and covered by a roadway made of fence rails and pine boughs. The column started across dismounted, each man leading his horse by the light of fence-rail fires at the ends of the bridge, but only one or two squadrons had got over when the burned stringer gave way and toppled the passing column into the river twelve or fifteen feet below. With men and horses struggling in water as black as the Styx, the scene was one never to be forgotten, but without wasting time I called for another tree already at hand, and in less than thirty minutes the breach was repaired and the column again in motion. It may be noted that, although I was standing on the bridge and felt it giving away, I stepped on to the only stable cross-beam as the span was going down, and was the only man on the structure that did not fall into the river.

By daylight on July 1, the body of the command was safely over, but as stragglers were still coming in I kept the rear guard well out till after sunup. It was a brilliant, hot morning, and when the last man, horse, wagon, and contraband had passed on toward the James River and just as the enemy made his appearance at 6:15, I personally set fire to a pile of dried leaves and pine fence rails which I had got ready under the bridge while the column was crossing, and almost instantly had the pleasure of seeing the improvised structure, wrapped in a cloud of smoke, burning like a bonfire, as it really was.

A few minutes later a Confederate officer closed in on the bridge and, seeing not only that our last straggler had escaped, but that further pursuit was impossible, he cheerily called a truce with a "Good-by, boys, I am sorry to see you safely over." This pleasing episode put my mind at rest. For the first time in ten days I was slowly becoming conscious of hunger. As my command was now well on the road to the James River, with all doubt of its safety at an end, my reply was one of cheerful badinage and exultation, while his rejoinder was one of good-natured regret, but we parted like soldiers with a polite "hail and farewell," which he will surely recall if he ever reads this narrative.

My steward and purveyor, foreseeing that I must now be fed, had impressed a neighboring farm house and its resources for a hearty breakfast of ham, eggs, fried potatoes, and corn bread, and I was about ready to mount when he made his appearance with his savory viands. Seated near the river, under a shade tree, I made a substantial meal, which

I washed down with army coffee. My staff and orderlies were even more hungry and more exultant than I was, for they were now sure that neither prison nor further exposure awaited them. Every man had had a hard time, and each had his story of adventure to tell.

As our horses played out on the march, it became necessary to be constantly on the lookout for new ones. One of my aids had changed several times, and one evening, just after we went into bivouac, he came in from the flank riding a handsome, high-headed chestnut single-footer which would have delighted the heart of a Kentucky horse breeder. Calling on the staff to admire his new charger as the finest in the command, I answered: "As he seems to be fresh, and all you claim for him, please ride back and tell Chapman not to go into camp till he crosses the bridge and then to picket the creek strongly to the rear till we take the road again about midnight."

Wheeling about, the aid dashed off, kicking up the dust finely, but had hardly been gone ten minutes when he returned looking somewhat confused, and remarked that he couldn't find Chapman. As Chapman made his appearance on the same road almost immediately afterward, a question arose why the aid had not found him. Brief consideration revealed the fact that they had met, but it was in the dark on the bridge and before they recognized each other the aid-de-camp found himself pushed off the bridge to the creek bottom ten feet below. The fall having confused him, he came out on the wrong side and was back at headquarters before he knew it. But, greatly to his chagrin, he now found that his

new horse was stone blind. Of course, he didn't hear the last of the chaffing for some time.

On another occasion, while passing to the head of the halted column in a dense wood at the darkest hour of the night, the same officer fell asleep in his saddle, but rousing himself by a strong effort, all unconscious that he was on horseback, he started forward again but, as he thought, this time on foot. He had hardly moved, however, when an overhanging limb struck him across the face, making him literally see lights, which he at once thought were on Broadway, New York. Thirsty and hungry, it at once occurred to him that he should cross the street and go into the Metropolitan Hotel for a drink and something to eat. Accordingly he moved again, but had hardly got under way when he ran into a tree which brought him up standing, this time wide awake. Dazed for a moment, and unable to recall where he was or how he got there, his consciousness slowly returned with a realizing sense that it was all a phantom and that he was really a staff officer involved in a halted column trying to get out of the woods of southeast Virginia. The entire incident could not have lasted more than a second, but it seemed like a long but indefinite part of a disagreeable night.

That afternoon at one o'clock we went into camp at Chipoak Swamp, about halfway between the Blackwater and Lighthouse Point, on the James River, and for the first time in ten days the entire command unsaddled, picketed, fed, and went regularly to sleep. It was an open, sandy country, fairly supplied with forage, and our rest at last was unbroken and perfect. We had marched and coun-

termarched in all, as near as I could figure it, from the map, something like three hundred and twenty-five miles, the last one hundred and twenty-five from the camp south of Stony Creek to Reams Station, and from Reams Station to the final camp south of Fort Powhattan between 2 A. M. of June 28 and 2 P. M. of July 1. During these two days and a half, or sixty hours, the command rested from marching and fighting not more than six hours altogether.

Having reached at last a place of absolute safety, I selected a small shade tree at the edge of an old field, and while my orderly and servant were unsaddling and arranging my equipments for a bed, I got out my tablets and began a dispatch announcing the safety of myself and command. I wrote: "Camp at Chipoak Swamp, July 1, 1864, 2 P. M. Major General A. A. Humphreys, Chief-of-Staff, Sir: I ha——" I intended to say: "I have the honor to report, etc., etc.," but after completing the "a" and starting the down stroke of the "v" I felt myself falling asleep. Possessed by the idea that it was important to finish my dispatch, I pulled myself up out of the stupor which was fast overcoming me, and started the up stroke of the "v," when I fell asleep again. Still half unconsciously struggling to complete what I had undertaken, I began the final upstroke, but before finishing it I felt myself going again, and with the hazy thought that my news would keep, which must have flashed through my mind like lightning, I succumbed, and fell back upon my blanket in a state of absolute stupor and forgetfulness which continued till ten o'clock the next morning without a break and with-

out the slightest consciousness. It was the longest straight sleep I ever had, but when it ended I found myself as completely refreshed as if I had lost no sleep and undergone no fatigue whatever. The command had evidently shared my sense of safety and relief as well as my rest. I had ordered pickets and camp guards posted as usual, and knew that the proper details were told off, but I never dared to ask whether they had performed their duty according to the rules and practice of war for fear I might learn that both officers and men had unconsciously followed my example and succumbed to sleep also. Be this as it may, I found the command all astir when I awoke; the air was filled with the smell of coffee and frying bacon, and the men were ready to lead out, mount, and take the road. We camped that night back of Fort Powhattan not far from the James River, and I wrote my report before going to bed, though it was not sent till July 3.[1]

The loss of the entire command at first was as follows: Four light howitzers, twelve brass field guns, thirty wagons and ambulances, which were abandoned or thrown into the river, besides something less than nine hundred men killed, wounded, and missing. Of the latter a large part, mostly men whose horses had been played out, finally found their way into camp and rejoined the colors, so that the actual loss, exclusive of the guns, was but little, if any, in excess of five hundred men, all told.[2]

[1] See O. R. Serial No. 80, p. 620, *et seq.*

[2] Kautz's total loss, as at first reported, was 421; Wilson's total loss, as at first reported, was 602. Serial No. 80, pp. 232, 238.

While the campaign ended in disaster for us, it was far more costly to the enemy.

From this summary it must be admitted that, with the proper coöperation of Sheridan and the Army of the Potomac, both Petersburg and Richmond must have been isolated and starved out, and must have fallen within a few days or a few weeks at most instead of at the end of almost another year under an entirely different set of circumstances.

Improbable as it may seem, it is also true that, for much of the time during the suspension of traffic on the Weldon Railroad, the Confederates were permitted to run regular wagon trains by the country roads under convoy around our left flank in sight of our signal stations and outposts, drawing supplies from Weldon and the neighboring country, and that no effort whatever was made to interfere with that practice.[1] It is said that warning was sent out on one or more occasions "to look out for the rebel cavalry" in rear, but this did not prevent the rebel cavalry from rounding up and driving off a herd of over two thousand four hundred head of beef cattle belonging to our commissariat. This was the crowning blow against us.

If I have dwelt on this humiliating episode at greater length than seems to have been called for, it is because the military lesson it teaches is an important one. The fatal mistake made by those in higher authority of dividing the cavalry corps into two weak bodies, when it should have been kept united and sent out with strength enough to go and return in spite of all the enemy could do to prevent

[1] O. R. Serial No. 81, p. 477.

it, should not be overlooked by the military student. While the failure to keep open the roads on which we were operating and to require Sheridan to follow Hampton wherever he might go seems inexcusable, it will be shown that the fault was neither Grant's, Meade's, nor Humphreys'.

Our consolation is that we did our part thoroughly, although we suffered greatly, and that Grant, both personally and officially, always declared that the damage inflicted on the enemy by the destruction of his communications was worth far more than it had cost. This will be more readily understood when it is recalled that Richmond and Petersburg, as well as Lee's army, from June, 1864, till the end of the war, drew by far the greater part of their food supplies from the interior of South Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama, by the roads I had broken so effectually. Fortunately, the naval blockade had so completely closed the principal southern seaports that Lee's main dependence for supplies of every sort rested upon the two lines of railroads connecting Richmond and Petersburg with Lynchburg to the west and with Danville to the southwest. As those lines cross each other at Burkeville, that junction was a place of the first importance. It was these two vital arteries which were the objects of my operations. Both might have been hopelessly destroyed had Sheridan's forces coöperated with and supported mine.

XIX

BREAKING LEE'S COMMUNICATIONS

Grant scatters his cavalry—Sheridan's failure north of Richmond—Wilson's destruction of railroads south of Richmond—Sheridan at White House—Slow to rejoin Army of Potomac—Hampton beats him to Weldon Railroad—Records and dispatches in the case—Sheridan's delays and excuses—Wilson's return to Reams Station—Whitaker takes word to Meade—Grant, Meade, and Humphreys order assistance—Wilson runs for it—Sheridan still a laggard—Kautz lies down and quits—Sheridan's efforts to exculpate himself—Wilson crosses Blackwater and arrives at Chipoak Swamp—Case fully stated from the records—Grant, Meade and Dana declare expedition a success—Confirmation of Confederate records.

Grant's efforts to set Hunter, Sheridan, and Wilson on Lee's lines of supply and then draw them back to the Army of the Potomac are both historically and strategically worthy of a fuller statement and discussion than have yet been given.

The Records show that Sheridan, in his movement north of the James, was especially ordered to form a junction with Hunter and return with him to the Army of the Potomac.[1] But Hunter's orders were not so specific, though Grant, on July 6,

[1] O. R. Serial No. 70, pp. 573, 578, 626, 651.

tried hard to put him on notice as to Sheridan. It now seems probable that Hunter never received Grant's letter, notwithstanding that Siegel and Stahel did their best to get it through to him.[1] Hunter knew, however, that Sheridan was operating about Louisa Court House.[2]

So Grant's efforts to unite Hunter and Sheridan failed, (1) because Hunter moved on Lynchburg from Staunton via Lexington and not, as Grant hoped, from Staunton by the way of Charlottesville; (2) because Sheridan found Hampton in his path at Trevillian on June 11 and 12, and, therefore, withdrew to the northeast[3] instead of to the northwest, forty-five miles, toward a detachment of Hunter's troops under Duffié at Waynesborough. If he had kept the field and pushed on resolutely, dropping Hampton as he did so, and, if necessary, dodging Charlottesville, which, next after Hunter, was his chief objective, he would have united with Hunter at Amherst Court House or in the vicinity of Lynchburg by the 15th or 16th in ample time to take part in the attack on Lynchburg on the 18th. Whether he could have made this march with Hampton dogging his steps is another matter, but it would seem that he might have done that just as easily as to leave the field and retreat through Spottsylvania by a roundabout route to White House.[4]

Sheridan failed ten days before I started, while Hunter held on in front of Lynchburg until the 18th, when, discouraged doubtless by news of Sheridan's

[1] O. R. Serial No. 70, p. 508.
[2] *Ib.*, pp. 98, 99.
[3] O. R. Serial No. 67, pp. 795-796.
[4] O. R. Serial No. 81, pp. 232, 267, 268 and 285.

reverse at Trevillian on the 12th, he ran for it, but unfortunately again through West Virginia to the Ohio instead of by way of Staunton down the valley. Thus the forces which should have been united were hopelessly scattered, and this, followed by Sheridan's circuitous march northeast and south, away from the enemy instead of directly back to the army, gave him his only excuse for failing to keep the door open for my return.

The situation in which Grant now found himself because of these scattered and divergent retreats, superadded to Meade's failure to extend his lines across the railroads to the Appomattox, together with the fear of an outbreak in the loyal states against the enforcement of the draft, is well indicated by Lincoln's pathetic dispatch, asking Grant to hold on where he was "with a bull-dog grip and chew and choke as much as possible."[1]

This homely language is not difficult to fathom. Grant had scattered his forces; Hunter and Sheridan, failing to form a junction, had been driven off on eccentric lines; I had been handled roughly in returning to the army; Meade had been foiled in his efforts to extend his lines across the railroads south of the James; Lee was gaining confidence and assuming an aggressive attitude, as shown by his detaching Early and sending him down the valley to menace Washington; but as a whole the army was to hold its grip with all its might till the Lieutenant General could correct his errors and convert a campaign of mistakes into one of proper combinations and victory. While the parts played by the various actors in bringing about existing conditions were of

[1] O. R. Serial No. 88, p. 243.

secondary importance, they appear upon personal examination even at this late date to justify a brief analysis and summary of their import.

The experienced soldier, as well as the careful military student, will readily perceive the evils which might result from dual commanders in any army and which did result more than once from that cause in the Army of the Potomac. It is but fair, however, to admit that Sheridan's apparent disregard of Meade's orders to take his place on the left of the army, and his unusual tardiness on this and other occasions, may have had their origin more in the defective machinery and the loose practice that prevailed at that time in transmitting orders and in supervising their execution than in any intentional slowness or indifference to the success of his operations. Prior to Grant's coming, Meade was in sole command. His word was law to all subordinates, not one of whom would have dared to show the indifference to his explicit orders that was manifested throughout this juncture by Sheridan. But the latter, as has been already stated, was one of the principal officers whom Grant brought with him from the West and it was to Grant that Sheridan appears to have looked, and not to Meade, for the last word.[1] Between Meade and Sheridan there was, if not a feeling of positive jealousy and dislike, at least a noticeable lack of that comradeship and sympathy which usually grow out of common dangers and intimate personal acquaintance.

When I started, on the morning of June 22, from Mount Sinai Church, Sheridan had been a full day and night at White House on the Pamunkey,

[1] O. R. Serial No. 81, p. 374.

something less than fifty miles from Reams Station, and the left of the Army of the Potomac. Having failed to form a junction and return with Hunter to Grant's army, there was no longer any justification for his remaining north of the James. Realizing this, Grant, on June 20, the same day he decided to send me against the railroads south of that river, instructed Meade to order Sheridan's "immediate return," but left Meade free to determine the "manner of returning and the route."[1]

On the same day Meade ordered Sheridan "as soon as practicable" to move his command and trains from White House to City Point, for the purpose of crossing the James by the pontoon bridge at Deep Bottom, or, if that was impracticable, to proceed to Douthat's Landing, opposite Fort Powhattan, where ferryboats would be provided.[2] Meanwhile Hampton, with most of the Confederate cavalry north of the James, was watching for a chance to intercept and crush Sheridan,[3] and, with the infantry reënforcements he was expecting, he was confident of being able to do this.[4] But with a keener instinct for correct movements Lee ordered him on the 18th:

> If Sheridan escapes and gets to his transports at White House, you must lose no time in removing your entire command to our right near Petersburg.[5]

Meanwhile Hampton claimed that his command needed forage and supplies, and that many of

[1] O. R. Serial No. 81, p. 231.
[2] *Ib.*, p. 255.
[3] *Ib.*, p. 660.
[4] *Ib.*, pp. 669-670.
[5] *Ib.*, 667.

his horses were broken down.[1] Although reënforced by the 21st, he did not then attack Sheridan, who was that day and the day before leisurely crossing the Pamunkey, under the protection of gunboats, while Hampton's forces were holding the bluffs surrounding the White House farm.[2] As soon as Sheridan got across the river he drove Hampton from the bluffs and from Tunstall's Station on the York River Railroad. This done, he arranged to abandon White House as a post and to move everything, including a train of over eight hundred wagons, belonging mostly to the infantry, to the James. On the 22nd he sent Torbert to secure Jones's Bridge over the Chickahominy, and with the short line to that point he had no trouble in doing so.[3] By the night of the 22nd he had safely parked his train on the south side of the Chickahominy, but, instead of going on to the James, Sheridan rested all the 23rd and did not march till the morning of the 24th. On the afternoon of that day Gregg, while covering Sheridan's right flank, was vigorously attacked by Hampton, and although he resisted stoutly till after dark, was finally forced to retire. The train under Torbert's protection was at no time attacked but reached Douthat's Landing on the morning of the 25th. From that place both the troops and the trains were finally ferried to the south side of the river.[4]

With his command and trains brought safely to the north bank of the James, Sheridan's activity

[1] O. R. Serial No. 81, pp. 669, 670, 681.
[2] O. R. Serial No. 71, p. 651.
[3] O. R. Serial No. 82, p. 14.
[4] O. R. Serial No. 67, pp. 798-799 (Wilson's Report).

ended. Grant was, however, under the impression that he was crossing the river on the 26th, but the fact is that he waited contrary to all rule until his trains were entirely over and did not begin crossing until the evening of the 27th,[1] and did not complete that operation till eleven o'clock on the 29th.[2] Why he did not cross before his train he does not explain, but as the river was patroled by our gunboats his trains were entirely safe on either side of the river and could have crossed in perfect safety at their leisure. Hampton took position on Lee's left by the 26th. Thus it will be seen that, with an entire day lost on the Chickahominy and two days lost on the James, Sheridan was now throwing away three days more. Meanwhile he was asked to explain his delay, and, in reply, attributed it to an insufficiency of supplies at White House.[3] But in this he was positively contradicted by Ingalls, the chief quartermaster, who showed that he had an abundance of both grain and hay.[4]

Three full days, the 22nd, 23rd, and 24th, were certainly ample to cover the twenty miles from White House to the James, even if the columns had been encumbered by a large train, with Hampton on its flank. But as Hampton made no attack till the afternoon of the 24th, and did not even then delay the trains or in any way engage Torbert, there is no reason why both Torbert and the trains should not have gone directly to the river bank. The simple fact is that Sheridan, for some unexplained rea-

[1] O. R. Serial No. 81, p. 743.

[2] *Ib.*, p. 512.

[3] *Ib.*, p. 402; also *Ib.*, p. 255.

[4] Ingalls to Williams, June 25, 1864, O. R. Serial No. 81, p. 402. See, also, O. R. Serial No. 82, p. 14.

son, was killing time, and even after reaching the river he took four and a half days more to ferry his trains and troops to the south bank. Thus nearly ten full days, from the evening of June 20 to June 29, elapsed between his arrival at White House and his getting to the south bank of the river. Surely this was not the celerity that should have been expected from the great cavalryman. As before intimated, an explanation may be found in the fact that Sheridan was looking to Grant rather than to Meade for his orders.[1] Be this as it may, it was not till June 26 that Grant turned him unreservedly over to Meade, saying: "Sheridan is now safe in as comfortable a place as he can be for recruiting his men and horses. You can [therefore] send him such orders as you think best. I think he should be got up leisurely to your left, where he can rest and at the same time add strength to your position."[2] It is also likely that Grant imparted this view to Sheridan, who visited headquarters June 26, but, whatever may have been the actual facts, it is certain that Meade ordered Sheridan at 12:30 that day "to take up a position on the Petersburg and Jerusalem plank road on the left flank of the army, sending a staff officer to headquarters in advance of your reaching the plank road to receive special instructions for your guidance. The officer who takes this dispatch . . . will acquaint you with the position now occupied by this army." Sheridan duly acknowledged this dispatch,[3] and at 4 P. M. the same day Grant wired Halleck:

[1] O. R. Serial No. 81, p. 374.
[2] *Ib.*, p. 431.
[3] *Ib.*, pp. 448, 449.

Sheridan is crossing the river near Powhattan unmolested by the enemy. . . . Nothing heard from Wilson since he left Burkeville.[1]

How Grant got this impression is not explained, but it is certain, as heretofore stated, that Sheridan did not begin to cross "until the evening of the 27th."

It will be recalled that Meade expressed the hope to Grant June 21 that Sheridan would keep Hampton occupied. It should also be recalled that Meade, on the 20th, advised that Sheridan and Wilson should be joined and moved together on the south side of the James to communicate with and assist Hunter, remarking that the force thus united "could not be stopped."[2] Meade followed this on the 21st with a note to Grant, saying:

Wilson will be ordered to leave at 2 A. M. to-morrow and directed to proceed as rapidly as possible to the junction of the Lynchburg and Danville roads. Hampton being yesterday at White House will relieve Wilson of any apprehension of being disturbed, and I trust Sheridan will keep Hampton occupied. . . . Wilson will be instructed when at the junction, Burkeville, to endeavor to communicate with Hunter near Lynchburg. The junction is about halfway between this point and Lynchburg. If Sheridan were here there would be no doubt, I think, of Wilson and he going to Lynchburg. Do you wish to send any instruction to Hunter by Wilson?[3]

To this Grant replied the same day:

The only word I would send Hunter would be simply to let him know where we are, and that he could use his

[1] O. R. Serial No. 81, p. 430.
[2] *Ib.*, p. 232.
[3] *Ib.*, p. 267.

army in the way he thinks best, either by getting back into his own department or by joining us. . . .[1]

The interest in this correspondence lies in the fact that Meade fully endorsed the views heretofore expressed as to the weight which such an expedition would have if made with our united cavalry forces, and also in the fact that it shows that both Grant and Meade knew that Hunter had already failed on the 18th in his attempt to capture Lynchburg, and was in full retreat. It will be noted that this failure relieved the enemy of all danger from the west, just as Sheridan's retreat from Trevillian by the way of Spottsylvania to the White House had set Hampton's entire cavalry free to concentrate against me south of the James.

It is obvious that Grant's purpose to cross the Weldon Railroad and hold it from Reams Station northward would have not only made good Humphreys's assurance to me, but would have been in accordance with the well-considered advice that General Barnard, the chief engineer, had given on June 28, that "the best use we can make of Hancock's and Warren's corps is to put them across the Weldon Railroad."[2] Had this been done, even without Sheridan's coöperation it must have opened the door and thus put it in my power to return to the army without any loss except that incurred in my outward march.

No one can read the Records without seeing plainly that from the 22nd of June to the 29th, when I appeared at Reams Station, the whole country on both sides of the Weldon road was as open and

[1] O. R. Serial No. 81, p. 268.
[2] O. R. Serial No. 70, p. 479.

as easy for Sheridan and Meade as it was for Hampton and Lee. On the 26th at 9 A. M. Meade reported to Grant that the enemy was moving down the Weldon Railroad ". . . that our cavalry had followed as far as Reams Station, where it found a small force trying to repair the railroad. But the weather was extremely hot, and the men needed rest, hence this force did not follow up the enemy nor retain its position on the road. . . ." He concluded as follows: "I have no report from Sheridan, but such as you received when last here, and as you sent him orders direct I presume his movements and progress are known to you."[1]

This shows clearly that the country was fully open to the enemy, who was more vigilant than our people. It also shows how much was lost by the divided command and responsibility as well as by defective staff arrangements.

Meanwhile Hampton was neither idle nor resting, but, acting under Lee's orders of June 18, crossed the James, as soon as Sheridan was off his hands, at Cox's Ferry with his entire command, except Fitzhugh Lee's division. This was during the afternoon of the 26th, and it is certain it was Hampton's troops which were reported by Meade to Grant as moving "down the Weldon Railroad." On the same day Fitzhugh Lee telegraphed General Lee that Hampton's division and Chambliss's brigade were on the south side of the river, while he was on the north side near the pontoon bridge—"can't I assist in catching raiders on Danville Road?"[2] His request was promptly granted, but

[1] O. R. Serial No. 81, p. 431.
[2] *Ib.*, p. 690.

his crossing was fully observed by General Butler's lookout, and this was duly reported to General Grant, who telegraphed Butler at 4:30 P. M. on the 26th:

The force crossing the James River is probably the enemy's cavalry, which was after Sheridan. The latter is now all safe, and no doubt the enemy have abandoned all idea of further molesting him.[1]

At 8:35 A. M. on the 27th Meade notified Grant that:

A heavy column of cavalry was seen this morning moving along the Weldon Railroad, undoubtedly with a view to meet Sheridan's force, or perhaps to attempt to annoy our rear. To secure the rear of this army and prevent annoyance from cavalry raids the enemy's force must either be occupied or a force stationed on our left and rear.[2]

To this Grant replied at 9:30 A. M.:

The enemy's cavalry . . . were seen to cross the James River yesterday. It is highly probable that this cavalry will take position to try to prevent operations by us on the Weldon road. You can give Sheridan such directions as you deem best under the circumstances.

To this Meade at 10 A. M. replied:

. . . I have already notified you the enemy's cavalry have been seen passing to our left and rear by the Weldon Railroad. I have no doubt their object *is to interpose between Wilson and Sheridan,*[3] and in the meantime to make a dash into our rear, if practicable. Orders were yester-

[1] O. R. Serial No. 81, pp. 451-2, 455-6.
[2] *Ib.*, p. 462.
[3] Italics not in original record.

day sent to Sheridan after crossing the river to move up the Jerusalem plank road and take post on the left of the army. . . . The Sixth Corps will hold the Jerusalem plank road. . . . The withdrawal of two divisions will make it necessary to hasten Sheridan's movements.[1]

On the 27th at 6 P. M. Grant wired Meade:

If Wilson finds his return cut off he will be apt to go out by New Berne, or if it is found that Hampton's cavalry has gone south, Sheridan will have to be put on his track.[2]

From the 25th till the evening of the 28th both the enemy's cavalry and infantry were seen moving on the roads west of the Weldon Railroad toward Reams Station, and these movements were duly reported to Meade, but necessarily remained unknown to Wilson.[3]

Meanwhile General Humphreys appears to have concluded that these movements menaced not only the left of our army, but the safety of my column. Regarding them as an effort to cut me off he vigorously ordered everything demanded by the situation except the two things which he had definitely promised in his final dispatch before I started: "Our infantry will hold across the Weldon road tonight"[4] and "Sheridan will keep Hampton occupied."[5] Both were entirely practicable. While the former depended on his own orders, the latter depended on Sheridan, who was ordinarily most alert and active. While Meade's chief reliance was evidently on Sheridan and orders were sent to hasten

[1] O. R. Serial No. 81, p. 463.
[2] *Ib.*, p. 463.
[3] *Ib.*, pp. 465, 469, 470, 471, 485, 486.
[4] *Ib.*, p. 286.
[5] *Ib.*, p. 286.

his movements, but to meet any cavalry attack until he could arrive, Gibbons's division was sent to the southeast on the Norfolk pike at the crossing of the Blackwater instead of to the southwest, Ferrero's division to Prince George Court House behind the army, and some dismounted cavalry were stationed at the Old Court House at the crossing of Bailey's Creek, quite remote from any point where they could be helpful to me. "The Sixth Corps [Wright] will hold the Jerusalem plank road," four or five miles east of the Weldon road and parallel to it. It will be observed that all of these dispositions were primarily intended "to meet any cavalry attack until the arrival of Sheridan."[1] But it should be noted that not one of them was in the slightest degree an offensive movement to keep open the door for me or to facilitate my return. This was Sheridan's job. It was apparent that Meade relied wholly on him to follow Hampton and to extend me a helping hand. This is explicitly set out and reiterated in a dispatch from Humphreys to Sheridan, dated June 27, 10 A. M.:

> A body of the enemy's cavalry, exceeding one thousand strong, was seen leaving Petersburg this morning in a southerly direction on a road near the Weldon Railroad, probably for the purpose of reinforcing the enemy's cavalry that followed Wilson, or of interposing between Wilson and us on Wilson's return. . . . The left of the army covers the Jerusalem plank road as far as four miles from Petersburg. The commanding general desires you to join the army as soon as practicable and be prepared for active coöperation with General Wilson to aid his return.[2]

[1] O. R. Serial No. 81, pp. 463-467.
[2] *Ib.*, p. 472.

This dispatch was sent by telegraph to Ingalls, chief quartermaster, at City Point, who forwarded it by special messenger to General Sheridan, who received it in turn at 3:15 P. M. He replied at once that he would "make every effort to cross the river rapidly. The wagons and ambulances will all be over to-night, and the whole command to-morrow night. I will cross one brigade of Gregg's division over the river this evening."

It is to be observed that Meade's order, as above, while more urgent, was hardly more than a repetition of the order sent Sheridan at White House on June 20, directing him to move to City Point. Obviously Grant's emphatic phrase, "immediate return," was translated into "as soon as practicable." From White House to the James, Sheridan had the short line on Hampton, and it is of interest that the distance from the James at Cox's Ferry, where Hampton crossed, to Reams Station is almost to a mile by the military maps the same as from Wind Mill Point, where Sheridan crossed. The latter would travel southwest by Prince George Court House and Lee's Mills to Reams while Hampton marched south through Petersburg down the wagon road on the west side of the Weldon Railroad. In neither case did the distance exceed twenty-five miles, or one easy day's march for cavalry. It is also true that Hampton crossed by pontoon in four hours and a half, while it took Sheridan four days and a half, although his dispatch, and what he actually did at the Pamunkey, indicated that it was possible to ferry his troops across in one day. We have seen, however, that his command was not all across until about noon on the 29th. If this was

due in any degree to Grant's phrase, . . . "I think he should be got up leisurely to your left," it is a clear case of the unhappiness of two masters of one army.

On the 28th, for some unaccountable reason, in apparent forgetfulness of the enemy's known movements, and in reply to Grant's inquiries of the 27th,[1] Meade notified him at 8 P. M. that he had "heard nothing from General Wilson, except the reports of contrabands that the railroads out of Petersburg have been cut."[2]

It is but fair to say that General Meade could not have received my report dated June 27, giving a full account of my expedition and its complete success throughout, except at the Roanoke Bridge, beyond which under the circumstances I could not be expected to go. This report sent by scout appears at its proper place in the Official Records,[3] but there is nothing to indicate when it was received, though I had certainly been gone long enough to put my superiors on the lookout for my return. Besides, my written instructions were explicit to rejoin the army as soon as the object of my expedition was accomplished. My going elsewhere was merely contingent. Meade's order above shows that I was expected and that he confidently believed Sheridan was moving up, and relied on him to give me such help as I might need. Humphreys was anxiously looking for me. Sheridan was fully notified the 27th of his part and duty. Grant, true to his confidence in me, rested largely on my

[1] O. R. Serial No. 81, p. 463.
[2] *Ib.*, p. 477, see, also, p. 470.
[3] *Ib.*, p. 473.

own energy and resourcefulness, but also trusted that Meade would get Sheridan up and place him wherever necessary.

The events of June 28 and 29, momentous in the history of my expedition, have already been told.[1] While Meade was writing his dispatch of the 28th to Grant, I was less than thirty miles away, and by the middle of the afternoon I had crossed the Nottaway at the Double Bridges, and was approaching Stony Creek Depot, there to find myself confronted by Hampton, backed strongly by infantry. Where was Sheridan? Still on the north side of the James,[2] whither he had come pursuant to Grant's direction June 20 for his "immediate return" to the Army of the Potomac.[3] On the 26th, as we have seen, Sheridan had been explicitly ordered to its left flank, to a position on the Jerusalem plank road, which, with any celerity whatever, would have brought him within five miles of Reams, and within less than fifteen miles of Stony Creek Depot that night. He received his order at 1:30 P. M. on June 26, while at Grant's headquarters,[4] and it is beyond doubt that he was fully informed. His third order reached him July 27 at 3:15 P. M. at Douthat's House north of the James. It particularly ordered him to join the army "as soon as practicable" for the express purpose of aiding my return.[5] As yet, no portion of his command had crossed the James, but he promised to make every

[1] O. R. Serial No. 81, pp. 304, 306, 307, 310, 332, 336, 350, 373, 402, 430, 476, 478.

[2] O. R. Serial No. 80, p. 28.

[3] *Ib.*, p. 231.

[4] *Ib.*, p. 499.

[5] *Ib.*, p. 473.

effort to cross rapidly, and to cross one brigade of Gregg's division that evening. It is also evident from Meade's dispatch to Humphreys at 12 A. M. on June 29 that he had on the 28th sent a further and fourth dispatch to Sheridan ordering him "to the crossing of the Warwick Swamp by the Jerusalem plank road, and is, I hope, now en route for that point. He should be hurried up without loss of time and Wright advised of his expected arrival."[1]

The dispatch of the 28th is not in the Official Records, but there is, however, an answer from Sheridan to Humphreys from Windmill Point, June 29, 1864, at 8:30 A. M., saying:

> All my command will be over the river by 9:30 A. M. to-day. I may be detained here to-day, supplying my troops with subsistence, forage, and clothing. Will march to-morrow morning. Shall try, however, to move to-day.

But before the hour of this telegram my advance was in front of Reams Station, almost in sight of our lines, cut off from them by a formidable force of the enemy's cavalry and infantry. From what precedes, it is clear that, notwithstanding three, if not four, specific orders, the last most imperative and urgent, to cross the James and join the army on its left, Sheridan, so far as concerned any active help to the army or to me, was as completely out of the impending battle as if his two powerful divisions had no existence. At the hour he was sending the above dispatch, at 8:30 A. M., my gallant aid, Captain Whitaker, was slashing his way through the rebel lines at Reams, bearing my message to Meade, and at 10:20 A. M. he was at Meade's head-

[1] O. R. Serial No. 80, p. 494.

quarters, with but eighteen of his men, bloody, dirty, and worn to a frazzle, but indomitable, and burning with a desire to lead the infantry to my relief.[1] All day, late into the night, and all the next day he was untiring, but, through no fault of his, neither Wright nor Gibbon, nor anybody else came to my relief.[2]

Of course, Whitaker's unexpected appearance made a great stir. Meade was unfortunately absent at Burnside's headquarters, and it was 11:45 A. M. before Humphreys could get Whitaker's report to him and receive back his orders.[3] Indeed, it was not until 12:45 P. M. that Humphreys received his final instructions. Meanwhile that excellent officer, never idle, had informed Hancock of the Second Corps [4] and Wright of the Sixth,[5] and the latter, pursuant to Meade's orders at 12:15 P. M., was instructed to send a division to Reams at once, and to follow with his whole corps. This was fine, but all far too late. Wright moved promptly and resolutely, but did not arrive at Reams until 7:45 P. M. Before 12 A. M. he had heard my guns,[6] and at 1:10 P. M. he knew from a corporal of my command who made his way through the fight with two prisoners that I was up against both infantry and cavalry.[7] In fact, as has been shown, I was confronted by the whole of Hampton's, Fitzhugh Lee's, and W. H. F. Lee's [8] cavalry, supported by Anderson's entire in-

[1] O. R. Serial No. 80, p. 493.
[2] *Ib.*, pp. 492, 507, 508, 526.
[3] *Ib.*, p. 493.
[4] *Ib.*, p. 499.
[5] *Ib.*, pp. 500-506.
[6] *Ib.*, p. 506.
[7] *Ib.*, p. 507.
[8] *Ib.*, p. 517.

fantry division, composed of Finnegan's, Sanders' and Perry's brigades, under Mahone, one of Lee's bravest fighting division commanders.[1] The combined forces thus arrayed against my five thousand five hundred worn and weary troopers were, according to the latest returns, cavalry ten thousand four hundred and ninety-three, infantry seven thousand five hundred and sixty-nine, a total of eighteen thousand and sixty-two men, of whom it is safe to say at least fifteen thousand were in line of battle.[2]

But Sheridan was still absent. If Wright's infantry had only been cavalry! Sheridan's orders, three or four times repeated, required him, as we have seen, to cross the James and take position on the left. Lee's orders to Hampton, June 18, were to follow Sheridan and take position on the rebel right.[3] This should have kept them in touch, the movement of one determining that of the other, and should have resulted in bringing them again face to face at or near Reams Station, which, of course, would have placed Sheridan in position by the morning of the 29th to afford me all the help I needed. Such were the plans for him, both of Grant and Meade, and such was Grant's expectation, while Humphreys' last promise to me was "Sheridan will keep Hampton occupied." Both expectation and promise were entirely reasonable and practicable, but both required promptitude and decision. In view of the fact that Sheridan had in fourteen days, June 12 to 25, marched only about one hundred and forty miles from Trevillian by the way of Spott-

[1] O. R. Serial No. 80, pp. 336, 375.
[2] O. R. Serial No. 82, p. 762.
[3] *Ib.*, p. 667.

sylvania Court House, Bowling Green, King and Queen Court House, White House, and Charles City to escape Hampton,[1] it surely should have been "practicable" to cross the James and march less than twenty-five miles more in five days to find him and take him in rear at Reams Station while I was attacking him in front. Reams is just eight miles due south of the Weldon Railroad terminus in Petersburg. It is just ten miles from Reams northeast to Prince George Court House and just twelve miles from there to Wind Mill Point. As the crow flies it is a shade over twenty miles from Wind Mill Point to Reams Station, and by the winding roads it is less than twenty-five miles. Let us now see from the Records just what Sheridan did under the impulse of imminent peril and impending disaster to me, and under the stimulus of Meade's peremptory orders, given with Grant's full knowledge and approval.

On receipt of Whitaker's startling report Meade, on the 29th, after expressing the hope that Sheridan was now en route to Warwick Swamp, instructed Humphreys to hurry him up without loss of time, and to advise Wright of his expected arrival.[2] Humphreys' orders were sufficiently explicit, but he caused them to be repeated through General Ingalls at City Point. This dispatch, the fifth in order, and all to the same effect, was sent at 12:55 P. M. on June 29. It contained the statement that:

. . . An officer had been sent to meet Sheridan on the Prince George Court House road and inform him that General Wilson was in the vicinity of Reams Station,

[1] O. R. Serial No. 82, p. 645.
[2] *Ib.*, p. 494.

where the enemy's cavalry had concentrated to prevent his return. It directed Sheridan to move with all the expedition possible to Reams Station to relieve General Wilson.

It also notified him that General Wilson was unable to cross Stony Creek last night, but had "sent Kautz on a detour to the left with the trains," and finally that Kautz had reached "the vicinity of Reams Station this morning between seven and eight o'clock, and found the enemy in force and position there."[1]

But, not content with what he had already ordered his Chief-of-Staff to do toward hurrying Sheridan,[2] Meade, at 1 P. M., made the sixth distinct effort to get him to the front. This time he declared: "Wilson is engaged with the enemy at Reams Station. . . . Please hurry up to Wilson's assistance as rapidly as possible."[3]

General Sheridan received this dispatch at 2:45 P. M. at White House, near Wind Mill Point[4] and the last of his command crossed the James River at 11 A. M.[5]

It is clear from the foregoing that Meade had as early as the 28th directed Sheridan definitely to take position at the crossing of the Warwick Swamp, which, if he had marched at once, would have brought him within four miles of me, easily, by noon of the 29th, with the enemy between us.

At last he moved, but not until 5 P. M., and his orders to Gregg, commanding his Second division,

[1] O. R. Serial No. 81, pp. 510, 511.
[2] *Ib.*, p. 511.
[3] *Ib.*, p. 511.
[4] *Ib.*, p. 511.
[5] *Ib.*, p. 512.

were not issued until 3:45 P. M., an hour after the receipt of the above-mentioned imperative and pressing telegrams and, while they directed Gregg to move with the utmost dispatch to Prince George Court House, they instructed him to halt there, and "await the arrival of the First Division." His whole command was massed there that evening.[1] It was only ten miles further to Reams Station, but he did not arrive there or communicate with Wright until after 3:30 P. M. on June 30.[2] Wright, having from eight to ten miles to march with his infantry, moving at 2 P. M. of the 29th, arrived within a mile and a half of Reams at 6 P. M., but, fully six hours too late, his advance did not occupy the Station till 7:35 P. M.[3] Wright, while not an over-aggressive soldier, was never a laggard, and, if he had heard the noise of combat, which by that time had faded far away, he would no doubt have hastened to lend a hand. He sent Meade all the information he was able at that hour, 7:35 P. M., to pick up about me, and it was sufficiently correct in substance. It was in effect that I was engaged with the enemy's cavalry and apparently doing well until their infantry came up at four o'clock and attacked my left.[4]

The record leaves Sheridan at Prince George, ten miles away, on the evening of the 29th, where he camped that night. At what hour he marched and where he was all day of the 30th and until late in the afternoon is not disclosed. He certainly did

[1] O. R. Serial No. 81, p. 512.
[2] *Ib.*, p. 527.
[3] *Ib.*, pp. 507-8.
[4] *Ib.*, p. 508.

not follow Hampton, and Meade evidently did not know where he was. On the morning of the 30th, at 9 A. M., he telegraphed Grant at City Point, sending a prisoner's statement, "somewhat confirmed by General Kautz." He feared "that Wilson was in a very precarious position, and that his command was pretty much scattered."

The prisoner's entire statement appears in the record. It was taken down and reported by the provost marshal general of our army, Colonel George H. Sharpe, and gives a sufficiently distressing, but somewhat overdrawn, account of my troubles, and confirms in the main the tally of the forces opposed to me. It adds one most significant and important item in any proper comparison of the relative condition of Sheridan's horses and mine: "The horses taken from Wilson were found to be very badly knocked up."[1]

Then Grant, imperturbable and optimistic as usual, took a hand. At 12:30 A. M. on the 30th he replied to Meade:

> The showing is against us by Kautz's dispatch, but with Wright at Reams Station, Wilson south of the enemy, and Sheridan marching in that direction, you have done all possible, and it will be queer if the count does not turn in our favor. I am very much in hopes that the enemy will be struck in the rear most disagreeably to him, and that his railroad in the meantime will be destroyed effectually as far as our troops occupy the line of it. I see nothing you can do beyond what you have done. If the enemy should follow Wright and Sheridan with infantry, of course, we will follow with infantry. All that I see beyond what you have already done is to follow up the

[1] O. R. Serial No. 81, p. 517.

same principle you have started upon—follow up the force of the enemy with a larger one.[1]

This was all sound, thorough, and admirable, but belated. If only its execution had been equal, or if, happily, Grant, under a less cumbersome organization, could have kept himself in closer touch with or personally superintended the operations. Even if it was all too late to be of any great help to me, there was a splendid chance all that day and during July 1 to clean up Hampton and to turn the count "in our favor." Meanwhile, I was helping myself fairly well.

But Sheridan did not reach Reams Station until almost seven o'clock of June 30, after the enemy's infantry had returned to Petersburg, "leaving the pursuit of Wilson to Hampton's cavalry."[2]

Both Hancock and Wright were vigilant and active, but with slow moving infantry they could not hope to come up with the enemy in time.[3] They received no tidings from Sheridan or Kautz.[4]

At 12:30 P. M. on June 30 the faithful Whitaker, who was out in charge of Wright's cavalry scouts, sent word to Humphreys that two hundred empty wagons, "guarded by North Carolina infantry, eight men to a wagon, with front and rear guards, had passed south, going from Petersburg to Stony Creek for forage."[5] At 3:30 P. M. the same day Wright telegraphed Humphreys that, as Sheridan was at the junction of Warwick Swamp and the

[1] O. R. Serial No. 81, p. 518.
[2] *Ib.*, *p.* 518.
[3] *Ib.*, p. 520.
[4] *Ib.*, pp. 521-2, 525-6.
[5] O. R. Serial No. 82, p. 526.

Jerusalem road, about seven miles in rear, where he would remain, he (Wright) would withdraw at once "in order to get over the intricate part of the road before dark." [1]

Then followed Wright's justification of his retrograde march, for which there was no real occasion, but which he had evidently been asked to explain.[2] That night, however, he received explicit orders to remain in the field to support Sheridan. At 12:30 P. M. on June 30 Humphreys was advised that "General Merritt's advance guard had just reached the plank road, about six miles from army headquarters." [3] This was Sheridan's leading division, which, after a march of six or seven miles in twenty hours, brings him again into the light.

At 3:25 P. M. on the 30th he notified Humphreys that he had "reached the plank road one mile and a half in advance of Warwick Swamp, and was pushing on to Reams Station, distant three or four miles; that he could learn nothing of General Wilson's command except from stragglers coming in, all giving different accounts. Parties coming up the plank road report the enemy's pickets on that flank, but some distance off. One of your staff officers reports a rebel cavalry force having crossed the plank road on my left and going toward my rear." [4]

On June 30 at 9 P. M. Meade directed him to move with his whole command in pursuit of the enemy, who was reported to have followed General

[1] O. R. Serial No. 81, p. 527.
[2] *Ib.*, pp. 527-8.
[3] *Ib.*, p. 530.
[4] *Ib.*, p. 530.

Wilson. After ascertaining definitely where General Wilson had gone he was to make every effort in his power to form a junction and return with him to the army. Meanwhile Wright was to remain where he was and give Sheridan such support as might be necessary. Finally he was ordered to keep the commanding general advised as often as possible of his operations.[1] These orders were right and not only covered the case, but offered Sheridan a fine chance to wipe out Hampton or to drive him to the interior of south Virginia.

The Lieutenant General, true to his duty, had also the same morning telegraphed General Butler to "send Kautz back to our left to report to Sheridan as soon as possible. It will take all our cavalry to extricate Wilson from his present perilous position."[2]

Thus, as we see, pursuant to Grant's plan "to follow up the force of the enemy with a larger one," Meade sought to execute it by setting into the field in vigorous pursuit of the enemy the combined forces of Sheridan and Kautz—all the available cavalry, supported by Wright and the entire Sixth Corps—a force ample not only to relieve me but to turn the count in our favor by wiping Hampton and Mahone from off the face of the earth. It was one of those opportunities which knock rarely at our doors, and which the best of us—even a great soldier—sometimes miss. Hampton's return after I had successfully eluded his pursuit might surely have been cut off and in the tired condition of his men and with his worn-out horses his force brought to

[1] O. R. Serial No. 81, p. 531.
[2] *Ib.*, p. 531.

bay and severely punished, if he had not been smashed up entirely. Even the two hundred wagons with their heavy infantry escort reported by Whitaker would have been an excellent objective and an ample reward for the effort necessary to their capture.[1]

But what came of it all? Absolutely nothing, for the reason that both Sheridan and Kautz failed to execute the orders that were given to them.

Kautz simply lay down and quit. On receipt of the stirring orders from Grant direct,[2] as well as from Meade[3] and Butler,[4] he went to Meade and begged off. Forgetting that the rest of us were marching and fighting for our lives, he put up the unsoldierly plea that his command was in no condition to do anything, and that the main cause of our rout was the worn-out condition of the men; that his men and horses had had nothing to eat for forty-eight hours; and that they were exhausted from loss of sleep. On this plea he hoped the order would be rescinded.[5]

Both his men and horses, while they had marched step for step with the rest homeward from Roanoke Bridge, had plenty both of provisions and forage. All lived largely on the country, it is true, but that country had not been foraged before and was by no means bare of supplies. At most, it was only the last twenty hours that had been especially exhausting, but when ordered to turn back and join Sheridan Kautz had already had more than fourteen

[1] O. R. Serial No. 81, pp. 500, 526.
[2] *Ib.*, p. 540.
[3] *Ib.*, p. 513.
[4] *Ib.*, pp. 531, 537.
[5] *Ib.*, p. 540.

hours' quiet sleep in the midst of our army and its abundance, while the rest of us, on his own showing, were still marching and fighting for our existence. Looking back after nearly fifty years, in the light of the printed record and the cold facts which I had never inquired into before, it all seems weak and contemptible in the last degree. Kautz, undoubtedly, rendered good service during the expedition and behaved with satisfactory efficiency down to the crucial moment in the afternoon of the 29th, when the need was greatest that every man should hang on to the last, "one for all and all for one."[1]

Fortunately, he had sense enough to direct himself toward Prince George Court House and our army, which he easily succeeded in joining, but just when or where his dispatch to Meade announcing his return does not state. He at first sent me word that he would follow my route, but finally drifted off on one of his own. Many of his wounded and far more relatively of his command than he had of mine joined my column and followed it in safety to our lines, where in due time they were turned over to him.[2] But it is perhaps enough to say that Kautz was a typical infantryman and never a success as a cavalry commander. It was a misfortune much more serious for the army than for himself.

Sheridan was a brilliant soldier, perhaps the most brilliant, and certainly one of the most aggressive and successful on either side. But, strangely enough, his greatest successes were not won as a leader of cavalry alone, but with mixed commands, as in the Valley of Virginia and in the culminating

[1] Compare O. R. Serial No. 80, p. 624, with p. 629.

[2] O. R. Serial No. 81, pp. 580-2.

campaign with Grant south of Richmond in the spring of 1865, in which with his united cavalry and the infantry of Warren and Wright he rendered heroic and decisive service. A great, well-deserved and lasting fame such as his, resting as it does on so firm a foundation, requires no suppression of the truth, especially when it demands that the whole truth should be told to others.

The truth is that Sheridan failed just as flatly and far more unpardonably than Kautz, and instead of obeying promptly and cheerfully Meade's orders, directing him to march with his whole command to my relief, gave reasons which were shown by both Grant's Quartermaster and his own to be unfounded.

In a telegram of July 1, 1864, at 8 A. M., Sheridan said in reply to the order instructing him to follow in the direction my command had gone:

> I will move in the morning, but it will be at the risk of dismounting my command. I marched from the river without forage and without preparation. My horses are worn out. Some of them have been without forage for forty-eight hours. I am satisfied General Wilson cannot keep any considerable body of his command together. I thought it best to keep open the roads leading to the south, so that small parties can come in, as they are now doing.[1]

To this excuse for not even trying, Humphreys promptly and curtly replied on July 1 at 5 P. M.:

> . . . The commanding general instructs me to say that whenever you can ascertain anything definite of either General Wilson or the enemy, and be satisfied from actual trial that no material aid can be rendered General Wilson

[1] O. R. Serial No. 81, p. 573.

or injury inflicted on the enemy, you can desist and return to the position assigned you on the left flank of the army.[1]

Even after that Sheridan adhered to his opinion and did not move until 6:25 A. M. of July 1, and then only to concentrate his command on the Jerusalem plank road, from whence during the day he was content to send one division south on that road, two regiments of which reached Freeman's Bridge over the Nottoway and one Stony Creek, neither of which were more than ten miles from his camp, where he remained all day. At 3 P. M. he sent a hard luck story to Humphreys based on what some straggling officers had told him that I had been completely routed and that my command was reduced to the remnant of McIntosh's brigade and one hundred and fifty men of Chapman's.[2] His advance went near enough to Jarratt's Station, where I had crossed two days before to find it occupied by Hampton's troopers. In other words, he was at last in easy reach of his old antagonist, whom I had stood off and eluded late in the evening of the 29th, but for reasons never given Sheridan failed to attack him.

Later in the day, but at what hour does not appear, Sheridan sent another report to Humphreys, this time on negro information, "that our cavalry, seven thousand, encamped on Mr. Wessell's farm, near Littleton, last night. This report has come to me from two or three sources, and unless troops have come up from Suffolk it must be General Wilson," and happily it was. He further stated:

[1] O. R. Serial No. 81, p. 574.
[2] *Ib.*, pp. 574-5.

. . . Men have been coming in all day in small squads, but none from General Wilson after Wednesday evening. Scouting parties report his having crossed the Nottoway, but I have all kinds of reports, and am afraid that, after he fell back from Reams Station, he was badly broken up.[1]

As the record shows, he did have "all kinds of reports," precisely such as might have been expected from men who did not stay to learn the exact truth, but left early in the fight, and, naturally enough, lied in self-justification. Doubtless he was so impressed by these reports that he did not think it worth while to march in my direction as ordered, with his whole command, and thus missed an opportunity such as Hampton rarely offered him.

That Meade was impatient with Sheridan and did not accept his excuses is clear from the fact that he ordered an investigation. At 9 A. M. on July 1 he telegraphed Grant:

I cannot understand how General Sheridan at Wind Mill Point could be forty-eight hours without forage, and have directed an investigation to ascertain upon whom the responsibility rests. As to the fatigue of his animals, I presume the enemy cannot be in much better condition, and Hampton must have made a forced march from the White House via Richmond.[2]

Meade followed this by sending Ingalls an extract from Sheridan's report claiming that he had marched from the river without forage and without preparation, that his horses were worn out, and that

[1] O. R. Serial No. 81, p. 574.
[2] *Ib.*, p. 560.

some of them had been without forage for forty-eight hours.[1]

As Ingalls' reply of July 21 is important and conclusive, it is here given entire:

> Your dispatch . . . conveys the first information that Sheridan's command had not plenty of forage. On his arrival at Douthat's I visited his headquarters to ascertain his wants. His Chief Quartermaster reported two days' [supplies] on hand then. He was told that there was an abundance . . . which could be delivered at any point on the river. I suspect General Sheridan means to convey the idea that his orders and the emergency of the case compelled him to leave hurriedly [and] without having time to make necessary preparations. He had but just crossed over his command. There was no good reason why he had not sufficient forage so far as the Quartermaster's Department was concerned.[2]

After further investigation Ingalls reported on July 1, on the authority of Sheridan's Chief Quartermaster:

> . . . That there was an abundance of hay and grain at Wind Mill Point when the cavalry left that place, but that the movement was so hurried it was not taken; that one division did leave with two days', but the other none. I can discover no failure or neglect in my department. Colonel Howard has a train now ready to start for Sheridan's command with two days' forage and three of subsistence. He has just learned where to send the train.[3]

These dispatches tell the whole story, and, when it is remembered that Sheridan had ten days' rest from June 20 to 29, inclusive, amid the abun-

[1] O. R. Serial No. 81, p. 562.
[2] *Ib.*, p. 563.
[3] *Ib.*, p. 563.

dance of White House,[1] Douthat's Landing, and City Point, and that when he sent his dispatch of 2 A. M., July 1, to Meade he had been out from Wind Mill Point only about twenty-four hours, in which time he had marched less than twenty miles and with two days' supply for one of his divisions, which was ample for his whole command for one day, the case becomes still more difficult to understand. As to tired horses, Meade's comments on the inevitable condition of Hampton's is all the comment that need be made. It will not be forgotten, however, that my command had just finished a circuitous march of about three hundred and twenty-five miles in ten days, during the most of which Sheridan was resting quietly in the midst of abundance.

Meanwhile, as already shown, Hampton's command, although his horses were tired and worn, had managed to march by a similar route against Sheridan's shorter line, to fight and shut me out on my return. Or, as Grant tersely put it, in his dispatch to Halleck on July 1:

> The enemy's cavalry, finding that Sheridan was secure where he was crossing the James River, left him and interposed themselves on the Weldon Railroad between Wilson and his return.[2]

It cannot be denied that after two months of hard campaigning both men and horses were tired and run down and needed rest, but there is no escape from the conclusion that as between Sheridan, Hampton and myself, Sheridan's mounts were al-

[1] O. R. Serial No. 82, p. 14.
[2] O. R. Serial No. 81, p. 557.

together the best fed, best rested, and most capable of the lot. In reaching this conclusion I do not ignore the strenuous battle at Trevillian, in which Hampton claims that he defeated Sheridan "with heavy loss," and forced him to retreat "in confusion."[1] Nor do I forget that Hampton fought Gregg on the 24th at Nance's Shop and claimed "after a stubborn fight to have routed them completely."[2] Hampton made substantially the same claim to Lee in my case, both as to Stony Creek on the 28th and Reams on the 29th.[3] The fine old fighter was evidently claiming everything in sight, and, as the Confederate combinations were better than ours, I freely confess, he had a good deal of substantial success to his credit. Why Sheridan should have ignored all this and claimed a victory in his own campaign, while he designated mine as a "disaster" and "defeat," and declared that my command was "all broken up and dispersed," it is difficult to understand. It evidently, in most cases, depends on the point of view of the person writing the report or telling the story. In any event, it is sufficient to say that I was not idle, and from the 22nd to the 25th was marching, fighting, and standing off W. H. F. Lee's division, as well as the infantry and home guards at Staunton River, with one hand, while tearing up railroads, burning and destroying the main lines of supply and the vital resources of the Confederacy with the other. From June 25 to the morning of July 1, while others were resting by the wayside, my command

[1] O. R. Serial No. 81, p. 645.
[2] *Ib.*, p. 688.
[3] *Ib.*, p. 72.

was marching forty miles a day and fighting day and night to extricate itself from the toils of the enemy, during which it was, according to all rule, Sheridan's special and particular duty with or without orders to follow Hampton wherever he went.

Surely it cannot be imagined that Sheridan had had enough of Hampton, or that he wanted to be "counted out" of another "free fight" with his old antagonist.

In sharp contrast with Sheridan's readiness to believe the worst is the declaration of the Lieutenant General "that the work done by Wilson and his cavalry is of great importance,"[1] and "more than compensated for the loss we sustained."[2]

Dana reported July 1 to the same effect:

> . . . This raid seems to have surpassed all others except Hunter's in the damage inflicted on the enemy.[3]

Neither were Meade nor Humphreys ready to give up in despair. Both insisted to the last that Sheridan should go to my assistance, and they, as well as Burnside, expressed their gratification at my return.[4]

But while Sheridan admits in his "Memoirs" that the Weldon Railroad near Reams Station was not covered by our infantry, as General Humphreys informed Wilson it would be, he strenuously denies that his orders required him to look after or to retain Hampton. On the contrary, he claimed that his instructions required him to break up the depot at White House and then bring the train across the

[1] O. R. Serial No. 80, p. 560.
[2] O. R. Serial No. 81, pp. 516 and 578; also No. 80, p. 28.
[3] See Dana's reports, O. R. Serial No. 80, p. 30 *et seq.*
[4] O. R. Serial No. 81, pp. 509, 572.

peninsula as soon as practicable; that these instructions were never modified; and that he began the duty thus imposed on him on the morning of the 23rd, totally in the dark as to "what was expected of Wilson," and yet he admits from some correspondence between Generals Grant and Meade, which he never saw till after the war, that Grant thought Wilson could rely on Hampton's absence from the field of operations throughout the expedition.

But how under the pressing orders, sent by special messenger on June 27 and urgently repeated on the 28th and 29th, Sheridan could say he never knew "till after the war" what was expected is difficult to understand. To deny that it was his clear duty to go to Wilson's assistance as soon as he knew that Hampton had withdrawn from his front is to deny that Grant and Meade knew the meaning of the English language. Clearly, he should have left his train under the guns of the navy and crossed his troops without delay to the south side of the James.[1] Not to do so was to violate the plainest rules of scientific warfare, as well as to act contrary to his own most earnest convictions that about the worst use that could be made of cavalry was guarding wagon trains. Moreover, he falls into two specific errors as to dates, both bearing on his ability to reach Reams in time to be of service to me. He moved from the White House on June 22, and not June 23, as he states, and Kautz did not rejoin the army June 28, but late in the night of June 29. Under such circumstances a whole day, or even four or five hours, earlier for

[1] O. R. Serial No. 71, p. 559.

either Wright or Sheridan might have made all the difference between disaster and the crowning success of my expedition.

Strategically considered, Sheridan's admission as to Humphreys' promise that our infantry should hold across the Weldon Railroad is relatively unimportant in comparison with the Cavalry Corps' presence on the left flank of our army, in position to engage Hampton, or to follow him wherever he might go. Wright, while waiting for other infantry to take its stand in front of the enemy, had no difficulty in reaching Reams and holding his position across the road within five or six hours from the receipt of his orders. Nor would Sheridan have had if he had, even with his late start, marched as rapidly as cavalry should have done to the crossing of the Jerusalem plank road and Warwick Swamp.

His next statement that the moment he received orders to go to the relief of Wilson he "hastened with Torbert and Gregg by way of Prince George Court House and Lee's Mills to Reams Station" is not in accordance with the Records.[1] That a great soldier like Sheridan, in face of his orders on June 20 and subsequent dates, especially the 26th, 27th, and 28th, could indite, even after the lapse of a quarter of a century, such a paragraph as that above shows that his memory must have failed or that he wrote carelessly to say the least. If the orders he received at 2:45 P. M. of the 29th, to march "with all the expedition possible," and "as rapidly as possible," authorized him to delay until 5 P. M. and then to march only twelve of the twenty miles between him and Hampton, then the word "hasten"

[1] "Sheridan's Memoirs," p. 244.

has surely lost its meaning for cavalry. If to take twenty hours more to cover the remaining ten miles between Prince George Court House and Reams Station is the best cavalry could do, then it has no advantage over the infantry. Napoleon's phrase about Grouchy's "*s'amuse à Gembloux*" alone fitly describes such slowness at such a juncture.

But further on Sheridan, writing as my corps commander, does me the justice to say that my retreat from the perilous situation at Reams Station in the face of two brigades of infantry and three divisions of cavalry was a most creditable performance. Then, as though the praise was too great, he criticizes me for relying too much on meeting our infantry and for not marching on the 28th by Jarratt's Station to Peter's Bridge, on the Nottoway, and to Blunt's Bridge, on the Blackwater, to the rear of the army of the Potomac instead of to Reams Station.

To all this the sure and unanswerable reply is that in Sheridan's absence with his two splendid divisions no route was open for my return and none across which I might not have found Hampton's entire cavalry, supported by Mahone's infantry, within easy reach. Obviously, if I had not met Hampton at Stony Creek and Reams Station, I should certainly have found him at Jarratt's Station or at Peter's Bridge, on the Nottoway, or at Blunt's, on the Blackwater. At any of these places, as well as at Reams, his far heavier weight would inevitably have occupied me until his infantry had joined, in which event my last fate would have been far worse than my first.

It is pleasant to add that in his final report at

the close of the war General Grant did not, like Sheridan, measure my services in terms of doubtful equivalents, but tersely declared that "the damages to the enemy in this expedition more than compensated for the losses we sustained. It severed all connection by railroad with Richmond [and Petersburg] for several weeks."[1]

Here, with the count decisively in my favor, I might well leave it, but perhaps, after all, the most conclusive evidence of the greatly preponderating value of the expedition to us, in its results weighed against our losses, will be found upon a brief glance at the Confederates' side of the case.

The *Richmond Examiner* of July 5, 1864, immediately after my return, urged that no prisoners should thereafter be taken from raiding parties.[2] The *Richmond Examiner* of the 7th and 8th were full of fury over Wilson's Raid;[3] and, judging the hurt to the enemy by the bitterness of his outcry, his wounds, if not mortal, were painful, indeed, and their effects continued to be felt till the close of the war.

The Southern newspaper phase is fully covered by the above extract and by the results of special inquiry made by General Meade in reference to an editorial of the *Examiner* of July 2, to which he called my special attention. The curious reader will find that subject in Meade's letter transmitting the *Examiner* to me and in the reply of my subordinate and myself thereto.[4] But altogether the most weighty and conclusive testimony as to the deadly

[1] O. R. Serial No. 95, p. 25.
[2] O. R. Serial No. 80, p. 35.
[3] O. R. Serial No. 80, p. 37.
[4] O. R. Serial No. 81, p. 632; No. 82, pp. 15-18; No. 68, p. 113.

nature of the blow is to be found in General Lee's correspondence with the Confederate Secretary of War, June 21, 1864. . . . "It is of the last importance, then, that the Danville, Piedmont, and Southside roads be well stock . . . and guarded as effectively as possible against raiding parties of the enemy."[1] Again, Lee, writing to Seddon, June 26, at the very time I was in the midst of the operations against the Danville roads, and, referring to the necessity for its repair at once and to its operation to its full capacity, concluded: "But if this cannot be done, I see no way of averting the terrible disaster that will result."[2]

As the concurrent evidence of the damage done at the time shows that the railroad was put completely out of operation "for several weeks," it may readily be inferred from Lee's language that the blow was most effectual, if not fatal, in its results. Great additional importance is given to the subject by the further urgent appeals made by Lee to the Confederate Secretary of War, to stimulate in every possible way "the utmost exertion in repairing the Danville Railroad," and to that end to advise the robbing of other railroads "by removing the rails from those railroads not of prime necessity." This correspondence further discloses a peculiar interest and care for this particular line, inasmuch as it directed that when the repairs were completed, the fact should not be made known to the enemy and that the newspaper publishers "should abstain from any reference to it, even by implication."[3]

[1] O. R. Serial No. 81, p. 671.
[2] *Ib.*, p. 690.
[3] *Ib.*, pp. 696, 697.

Seddon's replies are also interesting. On June 29 he wrote Lee two letters, in one of which he referred to a letter of the 28th instant, "relative to the necessity of obtaining a supply of railroad iron," and said: "I agree with you as to the only mode of accomplishing it and have already taken active measures to remove the iron from the less important roads. I shall have to encounter injunctions and vexatious litigations, but the necessity, in my judgment is too imperative to allow hesitation in disregarding such proceedings so far as they would prevent immediate command of iron."[1]

In spite of this imperative use of all the resources of the Confederacy available at Richmond and vicinity for the repairs of the Danville Railroad, it remained out of commission certainly as late as July 31.[2] At least ten miles of it south of Meherrin Station had not then been repaired.[3] How much longer it was lost to the Confederacy and how bitterly the deprivation was felt is not altogether a matter of conjecture. John Tyler, a son or near relative of a former president of the United States, writing from Richmond to General Sterling Price, July 9, 1864, acknowledging the damage done both by Sheridan's raid and mine, bears unwilling witness to the thoroughness with which Wilson and Kautz "succeeded in cutting all our communications with the provisioning states of Georgia and Alabama," which brought the Confederate people to "actual want and starvation," from which "the

[1] O. R. Serial No. 81, p. 701; No. 82, p. 754.

[2] Read in this connection Lee, Davis and Seddon, O. R. Serial No. 88, p. 1194.

[3] O. R. Serial No. 82, p. 692.

army itself cannot altogether escape." This the writer feared "more than the muskets and cannon of the enemy. Our situation in Georgia under Johnston is similar to that here, but he is nearer provisions and is in less danger of starvation. Flour here is now commanding in market $400 per barrel and everything else in proportion. Many in and out of Richmond must starve to death this coming winter." [1]

Perhaps the grimmest evidence that "starvation —literal starvation—was doing its deadly work" in breaking down the Confederacy is found in the "Reminiscences of General John B. Gordon." That sturdy and determined fighter, whom no one will accuse of weakness or exaggeration, frankly declares that many of Lee's men were so weakened and poisoned by unsound and insufficient food that wounds which would have hardly been reported at the beginning of the war afterward often caused blood poisoning and death. In illustration he told how a man made sick at night by eating parched corn would call out the next morning: "Hello, General, I'm all right now, and if you will have the commissary issue me a good mess of minced hay for breakfast, I'll be ready for the next fight." Quoting one of the surgeons, he declared, "famine oppressed them everywhere." A quarter of a pound of rancid bacon and a little cornmeal was the ordinary ration, but even that failed when the railroads broke down or were destroyed, and the bacon, meal and flour were left piled up beside the tracks in the southwest.[2]

[1] O. R. Serial No. 82, p. 758.

[2] Gordon's "Reminiscences of the Civil War," pp. 381, 419.

Mrs. Burton Harrison, in her happily written reminiscences of the dark days in Richmond, confirms the above, and it is now well known that my deep cut into the vitals of the Confederacy was the beginning of that "terrible disaster" feared by Lee and which followed in the spring after a hard winter had sapped the strength and morale of his army. It is also an interesting fact that the work of destroying the resources and communications of the Confederacy, thus successfully begun in Virginia by Hunter, Sheridan, and myself, was thoroughly completed and the last blow struck by troops under my command in March and April, 1865, during the final campaign through the states of Alabama and Georgia.

Measuring then the success of my operations in south Virginia by the severity of the distress and injury inflicted upon the enemy, it is apparent that my blow struck home against the vitals of the Confederacy and made it more than probable that if Sheridan had united with either Hunter or myself, Lynchburg would have been captured and the railroads south of the James would have been destroyed beyond the hope of repair. With this done our victorious return to the Army of the Potomac[1] would have enabled it not only to occupy the railroads south and west of Richmond and Petersburg permanently, but would have made it feasible for Grant to end the war nearly a year earlier than he did.

It should be noted that the cavalry operations by which the railroads around Richmond and Petersburg were so seriously interrupted have been com-

[1] O. R. Serial No. 70, pp. 650, 652.

monly called raids, but the military student will regard them as serious and necessary parts of a general campaign, which should have compelled the evacuation of both those cities. That they fell short of this expectation was certainly due, first, to Grant's scattering instead of concentrating the forces available for their execution; second, to the failure of the infantry confronting Petersburg to extend its lines across both the country and railroads to the Appomattox; and, third, to Sheridan's failure, with or without orders, to follow Hampton from the hour he disappeared from his front north of the James, to the left of our army, where it would have been easy for Sheridan to keep open the road for my return to a junction with the Army of the Potomac.

XX

RESTING AND REFITTING DIVISION ON THE JAMES

Charges of Richmond newspapers—Meade asks for explanations—Serious epoch—Early crosses Potomac and threatens Washington—Sheridan in command against him—Wilson goes to Sheridan's assistance—Interview with Stanton at Washington—Covers Sheridan's rear from Winchester to Halltown—Affair at Kearneyville—Revisits Antietam battlefield—Return to Valley of Virginia.

We had hardly got back and received the congratulations of our friends when a Richmond newspaper was sent me by General Grant claiming to contain a correct account of my captured headquarters wagon and of the articles found in it. It also printed a note from Dana, written in such a characteristically bad hand that it could not be deciphered, and hence as published made nothing but nonsense. It alleged that a service of church plate had been found among my effects, along with a lot of wines and delicacies, on which they charged me with being "a highwayman, a wine-bibber, and a modern Sardanapalus." Grant and my friends considered these denunciations as the best evidence that our

expedition had succeeded, not only in doing what it had been sent for, but in giving a serious blow to the enemy. As it was well known that I drank nothing stronger than coffee and did not even permit liquor to be brought to my headquarters, neither of these charges gave me much concern. But Meade at first took a more serious view of the matter, for without delay he sent an official communication through the regular channels,[1] calling my attention to the statement of the *Richmond Examiner,* July 2, 1864, and asking an explanation of its allegations against myself and my command. Sheridan brought the communication in person and as he handed it to me he called out, without waiting for my comments: "Damn him! Give him hell!"

Of course, I replied at once in a formal report, supported by certified copies of circular orders for the government of my command, accompanied by statements on honor of my assistants, adjutant, inspector, and provost marshal general.[2] It was easy enough for me to disclaim all knowledge of the church service, the wines and liquors, and the highway robbery charges. Having done that, I called attention to the fact that the outcry of the Richmond newspapers in face of the precautions I had taken to maintain discipline, instead of being a basis of charges against me and my command, should be considered rather as conclusive testimony to the success of our raid and to the injury it had inflicted upon the enemy. I am glad to add that as soon as my report and the accompanying documents were reached General Meade accepted them as "entirely

[1] O. R. Serial No. 81, p. 632.
[2] O. R. Serial No. 82, pp. 15, 16, 17, 18.

satisfactory,"[1] and the incident was closed. Meeting him a few days later, he not only assured me "that it was not his design to reflect upon either myself or my command," but then and there he tendered me and my division his heartiest thanks. He recognized fully our success and the great damage we had inflicted upon the enemy's communications, but, singularly enough, he made no reference whatever to the far more important matter of Sheridan's failure to follow Hampton, or to his own failure to keep the roads open for our return to the army.

I learned afterward from Dana and Rawlins that Meade's action in this case was strongly disapproved by Grant, and that the latter was on the point of making it the final grounds for removing Meade from command of the Army of the Potomac and for simplifying the organization of the forces under his command. While neither proposition was carried into effect, the former serves to show that the relations between Grant and Meade, although externally friendly, were really in what might be rightly designated as a state of unstable equilibrium. It indicates also that Grant was far from satisfied with the arrangements as they existed, or with the results obtained, and that it would have required but little additional friction to bring about a reorganization of the army at that time. Both Dana and Rawlins declared that they had never seen Grant so disturbed as he was on that occasion and that he had more than once said openly that he intended to remove Meade from command.[2]

[1] O. R. Serial No. 82, p. 68.

[2] See also "Dana's Recollections of the Civil War," pp. 226, 227, 228.

Naturally, the storm blew over, and yet the military student, reflecting upon Meade's and Sheridan's failure to hold the door open for me, might well regret that it had not ended in Grant's taking immediate and direct command of all the troops serving in that theater of war and reducing Meade, in spite of his undoubted merits, to the command of an army corps. With Rawlins as chief-of-staff and Humphreys as his professional assistant, no better team could have been arranged for working out the details of army movements and of securing their prompt, orderly, and coherent execution. It would, at least, have placed the responsibility upon them as Grant's principal assistants and made it known that to them and them alone should all failures in the details of military operations be ascribed. How much sooner the war would have ended, no one can state, but that it would have gone forward in that theater at least in a much more methodical and effective manner can hardly be questioned. Meade, although somewhat lacking in aggressive temper, was an able and accomplished soldier, but he, like the rest, would have found it much easier to command an army corps than an entire army, and much simpler to execute detailed instructions than to frame them himself, or to cause others to carry them into effect with the promptitude and regularity necessary for the success, without which all military plans and operations are but wasted effort and expense.

The war had now reached an important epoch. Grant, after two months' continuous fighting and fearful loss, had pushed his own army up against Lee's fortifications with such reënforcements and

counter-works as to make his position practically unassailable. He must, therefore, be dislodged by strategy, as McClellan had been dislodged from the north bank of the James two years before. The two main armies having fought each other to a standstill at Petersburg and Hunter having been defeated at Lynchburg and retreated toward the Ohio, instead of down the valley of Virginia, an *impasse* now followed, during which Lee seems to have become somewhat overconfident. Regarding his lines as impregnable, he detached an additional force from his army, with orders to menace Washington and the country north of the Potomac. Confusion and excitement followed at the national capital. Grant, as Lieutenant General, had naturally absorbed all power and responsibility. He was the actual commander-in-chief, and it was then the custom for all inferior commanders to take their orders directly from his headquarters. In consequence of this custom, aided as it was by Grant's indisposition to give detailed instructions, the generals commanding at Washington and vicinity were more or less left to their own devices, and, neither having supreme authority over the other, military movements were uncertain, while effective combinations were almost impossible.

As the enemy made his appearance on the Monocacy in July, threatening to invest Washington, Grant, who had not left the James, was called to the new scene of action by the Secretary of War. Dana had already advised him to come at once, if he wished an effective defense to be made.[1] He had thereupon ordered the Sixth Corps to Washington.

[1] "Dana's Recollections," p. 229 *et seq.*

Hunter, the senior general in that quarter, was getting old. While a most gallant and aggressive leader, he not only lacked decision, but his eccentric retreat to the Ohio had effectually removed him from his true field of operations. What the situation called for now was an active and vigorous commander over all the forces covering the national capital. After the battle of Monocacy and the appearance of the Sixth Corps in the defenses of Washington, Early and his Confederate forces withdrew to the Valley of Virginia. This made an aggressive campaign against him necessary.

Sheridan, the cavalry commander, was detailed to the new department, which included all northern Virginia. The two divisions under his immediate command, operating, resting, and refitting on the James River for nearly a month, were now in excellent condition for the first time.

Sheridan started for the Valley of Virginia on August 1, where he was soon joined by Torbert and later by myself with our respective divisions. Mine at that time consisted of two brigades. The first was commanded by Brigadier General John B. McIntosh, with the First Connecticut, Third New Jersey, Second New York (four troops), Fifth New York, Second Ohio, and Eighteenth Pennsylvania. The second brigade, commanded by Brigadier General George H. Chapman, consisted of the Third Indiana Detachment, First New Hampshire (seven troops), Eighth New York, Twenty-second New York, and the First Vermont. Battery M, Second United States Artillery, with six guns, was attached to the first brigade, and Batteries C and E, Fourth

United States Artillery, with six guns, was attached to the second brigade. While all of the regiments were small, they now mustered nearly five thousand men for duty.

During the last five days, with the Army of the Potomac, my division held the left flank from the end of our infantry line to Lee's Mill, where it connected with the Second Cavalry Division. Having been directed to coöperate with Torbert in an assault upon the enemy's position near the Lead Works, I made all my arrangements accordingly, dismounting my entire division, sending the horses to the rear, and deploying the troopers in single line, ready to advance at the word when Torbert rode upon the ground and asked me what the situation was in my front.[1]

As I understood it, my orders required an assault of the fortified line in front, without waiting for anybody, but I pointed out the probability that our attack would prove too light to break through the enemy's entrenchments, whereupon, without more ado, Torbert ordered me to withdraw my men and remount. Without further action, much to my surprise, he then reported that we had made a reconnoissance against the enemy, and, finding him too strongly fortified to justify a hope of success, had not ventured to make the attack ordered, but had gone into bivouac with both divisions in rear of the ground they had occupied.

While Torbert in this case doubtless saved many lives which would have been uselessly expended in an assault in open order, as was the custom in those

[1] O. R. Serial No. 82, p. 670, Wilson to Forsyth; also p. 670, Torbert to Humphreys.

days, his exercise of such discretion was quite new to me. It was the first time I found myself alongside either of the other divisions in line of battle, and I naturally felt anxious that mine should acquit itself creditably, but my surprise at the order not to attack, after receiving positive orders from army headquarters to do so, was greater, if possible, than my anxiety that the division should give a good account of itself. It was new practice, and, I am glad to say, one I never copied, for the idea that any subordinate should fail to carry out positive orders, or should report that he had carried them out when he had not really tried to do so, had never occurred to me as admissible in a great army with such tasks before it as then confronted the Army of the Potomac. Torbert was a good soldier who had won special distinction with the infantry and had done well with cavalry, but his military habits were entirely different from mine. It seemed then, and it has seemed ever since, that the exercise of discretion in regard to a movement ordered from headquarters as a part of a general plan was hazardous in the extreme.

Up to that time I had never failed to carry out any order received from proper authority. So long as plans or movements were open for discussion, I gave my views fully and freely, but when time came for action I left the responsibility to those in authority over me and did the very best I could with the means at my disposal, whether I approved the plan decided upon or not. Under this rule I can truthfully aver that I never received an order to attack or to go to any part of the field that I did not start promptly at the time designated. Nor did I ever

fail to reach the point toward which I was directed. This, it seems to me, should be the rule for all subordinate commanders, and yet the practice in the Army of the Potomac was frequently different, often leading to failures, as well as to ill-timed and disjointed efforts, which generally ended in loss and disaster.

On August 4, 1864, I withdrew from the left of the army and took steamer at City Point for Giesboro Depot, near Washington, to refit my division, to remount the dismounted men, and to exchange our heterogeneous assortment of firearms for the Spencer magazine carbine, which had been adopted as the standard for the cavalry largely on my recommendation.

With the whole division refitted as fully as the resources of the depot would permit, I began my march through Washington and Georgetown on the afternoon of August 12 to join Sheridan in the Valley of Virginia.

It was a beautiful day, the division was in better condition than ever before, many had new uniforms, the guidons were unfurled, the brigade bands playing and the column of platoons, with clanking sabers and clattering hoofs, made its impressive way by Pennsylvania Avenue and Georgetown to the Potomac bridge and country beyond. But the weather was as hot and dry as it could possibly be. Dana, who had joined me and was riding at my side, suggested that we should both relish a plate of ice cream. Thereupon we left the column to continue its march, while we dismounted at Ridenour's, then the principal restaurant in Washington, and proceeded to refresh ourselves, and I do not recall an

instance in all my life when I enjoyed an ice more thoroughly than I did upon that occasion. Of course, we ate quickly and took to horse before the rear of the column had passed.

Just beyond the war department an orderly overtook me with the information that Secretary Stanton wanted to see me at his office, and I reported there immediately. Clad in field uniform, forage cap, jacket, baggy trousers, top boots, a pair of silver spurs, and a rattling saber, I was shown at once into the Secretary's office. I had not met him for nearly three months, but as our relations had been in no way intimate, I expected but little courtesy and no civility at his hands. I am free to confess, however, that when he received me without salutation or asking me to be seated, but broke out in a loud and menacing voice: "General Wilson, I want to know why you wrote that letter to Senator Harris," I was somewhat surprised. As I did not recall the letter, I coolly asked: "What letter, Mr. Secretary?" Whereupon in a still louder and fiercer tone he said: "That letter about reorganizing the Second New York Cavalry." With that explanation I recalled the facts and at once answered: "Because the Second New York Cavalry, although worn down to four troops, is one of the best regiments in the service and I wanted to interest the Senator, for whom it is named the Harris Light Guard, in its reorganization. I felt that with his influence I could get Governor Seymour to fill up and return the regiment to the field more promptly than it could be done through the regular channels." This said, I concluded with some emphasis: "I therefore wrote that letter because the interests of the public

service required it!" Thereupon the Secretary exclaimed with still greater violence: "Well, I am surprised, Sir! By God, Sir, I am surprised! If you had been one of those damned volunteers, I should have thought nothing of it, but, coming from you, Sir, a regular, who ought to know better, I am surprised, Sir, that you should write such a letter to any one except through the official channels."

After I had correctly and fully explained I paused and then calmly asked if he had anything further to say. To this he replied: "That's all!" Thereupon I saluted, withdrew, and rejoined my command on the march. The Secretary's outburst was both violent and surprising, and when I state that the Second New York rejoined a few weeks later in the Valley of Virginia, under its boy colonel, the gallant Hull, with one thousand three hundred men and horses, I am sure I not only took the right course, but gave the irascible Secretary exactly the right answer.

I recount this trifling incident to illustrate the irascible temper and undignified behavior of the Secretary whenever he met an officer who did not fear him or stand trembling in his presence. It is too true that just such violent language was likely to come from him whenever he met any one against whose conduct he could raise either a technical or a valid objection. He was undoubtedly a man of great patriotism and determination, but I am sure his violent outbursts of temper and profane language arose from a serious defect of character. Had he been capable of self-control, or had the manners of a gentleman, he would have been a far greater and more admirable Secretary. It has been fre-

quently stated that no living American could have taken his place as Secretary of War, but, with some personal knowledge and a good deal of corroborative information, I have always believed that his temper and his bad manners were a serious blemish upon his character and a serious detriment to his usefulness. I am equally sure that there were other men, even in his own department, who could have filled that office much better than Mr. Stanton, notably Mr. Dana, who was much better qualified by actual contact with the army and its leading officers, by business experience and natural capacity, as well as by conviction, sanity of temper, and method.

The column reached Leesburg by night on August 12. The next day I pushed on through Snicker's Gap and Whitepost to Winchester, where I formed a junction with Sheridan just as he was retreating by the way of Berryville toward Harper's Ferry. Having joined Torbert's cavalry and Penrose's infantry, I at once took charge of covering their rear. With a good deal of sharp skirmishing I drove the enemy's advance back upon Breckenridge's corps, and thus closed the day, but we continued the march by night to Summit Point, where we bivouacked just before daylight.

The army found a strong position at Charlestown, a few miles farther on, but, for some reason never explained, it retreated the next day to Halltown, three miles west of Harper's Ferry. Sheridan had evidently not yet found himself. He persistently overestimated Early's strength, not only then, but till the end of the campaign. At all events, he maneuvered most cautiously for the next four weeks, during which time there was much comment

in the newspapers upon the uncertain outlook in his military division. His caution, whatever its cause, gave rise to much criticism of his assignment to so important a command. Although over thirty-three years of age and famed as an Indian fighter as well as a successful commander of both cavalry and infantry, he was thought by many too young and by others too inexperienced for so great a responsibility. The country, therefore, grew exceedingly uneasy, for, while Grant was making no progress south of the James, Early's army in the lower Shenandoah Valley was regarded as a great menace both to Washington and to Pennsylvania. While its real strength was doubtless understated by the Confederate authorities, there can be but little doubt that Sheridan, on the other hand, overestimated it largely from first to last. It will be recalled that Grant finally made a demonstration at Petersburg with the view of preventing further detachments, but his operations were both futile and disappointing, and this served to increase the anxiety for Sheridan. The price of gold rose rapidly to a height never before reached. The country became almost panic-stricken and even Grant himself, while professing every confidence in his gallant lieutenant, was evidently growing uneasy. During this season of doubt and hesitation my division did its full share of the work. It covered the rear, as usual, on the retreat and one flank or the other next to the enemy on the advance. At Halltown it held the extreme right, connecting with the infantry and the Potomac at Harper's Ferry. Torbert, Merritt, and Averell were near Shepherdstown, where the Valley Turnpike crossed the Potomac. This was the situation

on August 25, when I received orders to coöperate with Torbert in a movement by the way of Kearneyville, south of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, for the purpose of developing the enemy's position and purposes.

Having joined Torbert promptly on time in a clear, rolling, open country at Walper's Crossroads, near the railway station, and, as this was the first time the entire mounted force were united in an aggressive movement, I was anxious that my division, newly armed and equipped, should show what it could do. Many of our cavalry commanders had expressed their incredulity as to the merits of the Spencer magazine carbine with which all my regiments were now armed, and, as it was the first time in the history of war that an entire division of troops had ever appeared on any battlefield with magazine guns, both my brigade and regimental commanders were alert to show what they could do.

Just after crossing the railway our pickets, well out, reported the enemy as approaching. Hastily dismounting the entire division, sending the led horses to the rear and pushing the artillery close to the front, our strong skirmish line, deployed at intervals of only five feet, soon struck the enemy, marching in column toward the north. With a forward rush and a fire of surprising volume, we were soon hotly engaged, overthrowing the enemy's head of column and pushing him rapidly back a thousand yards or more, capturing between sixty and seventy prisoners, who were promptly brought to the rear for examination. As they represented regiments from all parts of Breckenridge's corps, it soon became clear that Early's whole army was again on

the road for Maryland. Realizing that a solid line of battle would be upon us as soon as it could form, I reported these facts promptly to Torbert and took the liberty of remounting my skirmishers with the least delay possible. By this precaution I was ready to withdraw as soon as orders to that effect could reach me.

Having accomplished the purpose of this reconnoissance in force, Torbert promptly directed that the corps withdraw and that our respective divisions should return to Shepherdstown and Halltown. One of my officers, having gone to Torbert's headquarters for such orders as he might wish to send me, while waiting, overheard Torbert and Merritt conferring and the latter say: "Give Wilson the rear, with orders to hold on strongly till we get out of the way. This will delay him, so that the enemy will follow him to Halltown and give him hell, while we return leisurely to our camps at Shepherdstown." My aid promptly reported this amiable suggestion to me still on the field.

Fully perceiving the trap thus set for me, I hastily mounted the skirmish line and rear guard and directed the officer in charge, while making as great a show of resistance as possible, to fall back slowly in open order, firing as the enemy advanced and maneuvering with all the deliberation possible, with the hope that we should thereby so delay the enemy as to gain ample time for the division with its batteries, after passing through the woods and gaining the side road to Halltown under the screen of the forest, to take the trot, with the calculation that by the time the enemy got through we should have disappeared entirely from sight. The skirmishers

were well and rapidly handled by Captain Blount, a gallant young aid-de-camp, who in the midst of it all, received a shot back of the ear, grooving his skull and knocking him senseless to the ground. The fall, however, revived him and, quickly remounting, he rode by, holding his bleeding ear from the side of his head and calling out cheerfully: "General, do you think this good for twenty days?" As I said: "Yes, go on," he rejoined his command, leaving the rest of us with the escort to cover our disappearing squadrons from the enemy behind the woods till we reached Halltown.

Meanwhile, Early, losing sight of us, marched straight down the turnpike till late in the evening, when he fell upon Torbert's unguarded camps without warning and drove most of his troops into the neighboring woods or into the Potomac. They were so completely surprised that they made no effective resistance. They had not even posted their pickets, nor had they begun to unsaddle, hence the result was not so disastrous as it might have been. Men and officers scrambled to their saddles as best they could in the darkness and confusion. Custer forded the river to Sharpsburg, while Torbert and Merritt, with several mixed and miscellaneous detachments, drifted into my camp between nine and ten o'clock that night in a state of disorder and confusion. Of course, we sounded to arms and stood to horse at once, waiting for the enemy or for orders, while our unexpected visitors rode on to Sheridan's headquarters.

Having already bivouacked, unsaddled, groomed, watered, and fed our horses and eaten our supper, we were quietly resting behind our regular guards

and pickets when the alarm was sounded at our outposts, but the first I knew of what had actually taken place was from Torbert himself, who reached my headquarters almost immediately afterward.

A half hour later Sheridan sent me orders, inspired by the discomfiture of his subordinates and the fear that the enemy would, without opposition, make a new invasion of Maryland, directing me to march at once by Harper's Ferry through Pleasant Valley and Boonsboro to Sharpsburg for the purpose of joining Custer and watching the river closely as far up as Williamsport. I was on the road by eleven o'clock. It was a beautiful, starlight night and, as I was familiar with the country from the Antietam campaign, I lost no time looking for roads, but the incident of the night, unexpected as it was, was not lacking in romance, slightly tinged with a sense of gratification. Of course, I was sorry that any part of the cavalry had been surprised and driven from its camps, but, having been in no way responsible for its division, and still less for Torbert's carelessness, I took no blame for extricating my own division from the trap, nor for feeling glad that the trap had closed rather on those who had set it than on those for whom it was intended.

I marched all that night by the north bank of the river, through the beautiful valleys separating the parallel mountain ranges, and by daylight had found Custer at Antietam Furnace, and, later in the day, Averell still farther up the Potomac. It took but a few hours more to make sure that the enemy had given up his plan of again crossing the Potomac and invading the North.

Obviously, it was now our duty to close in and

push Early as far south as our strength would permit. Accordingly, without waiting for orders, I recrossed the river at Shepherdstown on the 28th and, marching by the turnpike to Charlestown, reoccupied my old camp at Berryville, overlooking the valley of the Opequan, in the direction of Winchester. It was a beautiful region of mountains and fertile valleys, which had been the abode of Virginia's most distinguished families for nearly a hundred years. Its clear streams and rich harvests had made it a favorite theater from the outbreak of the war for the march of contending armies, and, while it had been measurably stripped of its stock and surplus provisions, it was still the cavalryman's delight. Charlestown, the scene of John Brown's trial and execution, had fully paid the penalty of its intolerance. From the first its houses had been looted and its people scattered. Its site was now marked by a desolate array of standing chimneys and every Northern detachment that passed through it felt justified in singing at its loudest: "John Brown's body lies moldering in the grave, while his soul goes marching on!"

Berryville, in whose outskirts my camps were pitched, had suffered no such misfortune. There was no animosity against it, and its people were treated as well as possible under the circumstances. Guards were placed over their residences and their little belongings were duly respected, though the existence of a horse in the neighborhood fit for a mount was a temptation that no cavalry soldier, whether Federal or Confederate, could be expected to resist. Just as we were going into camp the staff officer who had been pushed off the bridge in

south Virginia had again swapped horses, this time with a lad whom he met on the road. He had given a serviceable but somewhat antiquated mare in exchange for an exceedingly likely young horse and was rejoicing in the exchange when, just as our tents were rising, he cried out in a tone of anguish: "By heavens, there comes the old mare!" Thereupon, an exceedingly handsome, well-dressed woman was shown in and had hardly explained what she wanted when the officer very gallantly accepted his old jade and gave up the young horse. But this was not the end; the lady immediately explained that our men had also taken an excellent pair of young mules, without which it would be impossible for her to make a crop and carry on her farm work, both of which were necessary for the support of her young and innocent children. Her appeal was too touching for me and I replied at once with such gallantry as I could command that she might have her mules also if she could find them. As we had several hundred in our train and as all mules look more or less alike, I had no idea that she could pick out hers. Indeed, I did not suppose that there was a woman in the Confederacy who could have done so. But I was greatly mistaken, for within five minutes she walked out of our camp, leading two mules, much to the satisfaction of the aid-de-camp who had taken back the old mare. We afterward got to know the lady quite well and to regard her both for beauty and intelligence as a most charming person. During her next call I complimented her by saying how glad I was she was not a man, and when asked why I replied, because if she were a man, she would be a Confederate brigadier, accord-

ing to my judgment, with brains enough to supply a half dozen of the ordinary kind. As it turned out, she was the wife of Lee's staff surgeon, and, I am glad to add, her children not only grew up none the worse for our presence in the neighborhood, but afterward married greatly to the mother's satisfaction.

The entire lower valley had a special interest for me from the fact that my father was born near Front Royal, a few miles further up, and, according to tradition, his father had represented that district in Congress from 1804 to the close of 1808.[1] I had in my boyhood often heard my father speak of it as a region abounding in good land, beautiful streams, and patriotic people. From these circumstances I felt strongly drawn toward it and always said that if the war should reach that stage in which "our army should be divided as Parson Brownlow is said to have proposed: 'first the fighters, second the burners and third the surveyors,'" I hoped the Government would set off my share in the Valley of Virginia.

[1] "Biographical Congressional Directory," Alexander Wilson, p. 888.

XXI

IN THE VALLEY OF VIRGINIA

Sheridan rests and reconnoiters—McIntosh captures South Carolina regiments—Grant orders Sheridan to "go in"—Battle of the Opequan or Winchester—Wilson opens the engagement—Torbert and Wilson in pursuit—Gooney Run—Staunton—Browntown Gap—Return to Harrisonburg—Wilson ordered West to reorganize and command Sherman's cavalry.

From August 30 till September 13 we spent our time in resting, feeding, setting shoes, drilling, skirmishing, reconnoitering, and organizing an intelligence corps. Our front from Berryville extended from the Blue Ridge, through Millwood and Whitepost to the Opequan. Our officers became entirely familiar with the country and scarcely a rabbit could stir without their knowing it. The enemy, especially the redoubtable partisan Mosby, was constantly on the alert. Mosby was a dashing and enterprising fellow, liable when least expected to fall upon an outlying detachment by night or to assail one from a hidden nook in the woods by day. We made special efforts to capture him and several officers told how near they were to success, but none ever brought him in. He came there once, however, on his own account, but did not remain long enough

to be counted a prisoner. It was early one September night, when the camp guards, pickets, and sentinels were the only part of the command on watch. Neither I nor my staff had yet gone to bed. My adjutant, Captain Siebert, a herculean man and an excellent volunteer, a native of Darmstadt, and two of my aids were chatting with me by a smoldering camp fire when suddenly we heard sharp and rapid firing at the outposts, followed almost instantly by still closer firing and a racket as though we had been attacked by the enemy. The adjutant, ever vigilant, instantly ordered the bugler to sound: "To arms!" The call rang out clear at once, and was repeated from brigade and regimental headquarters till the whole command had responded to the notes of the bugle. The brigade commanders reported in less than five minutes that their men were under arms and ready for orders. Almost immediately a galloping rush was heard through the camp within a hundred yards of my own tent, followed in turn by the rattle of carbines and then by silence. It took but little to learn that Mosby, in a spirit of bravado, had charged our camp, doubtless expecting to surprise it and to pick up enough horses and prisoners to repay him for his enterprise. But the firing at the outposts and the sudden blare of the bugles quickly convinced him that a surprise was impossible. Such alarms were not infrequent. They cost my division nothing more than broken rest, but they were always welcome as good practice.

A few days later General Grant came to the Valley of Virginia to confer with our commander, and just before his arrival a spirited affair, in which McIntosh's brigade took the prominent part, stirred

up our camp and sent a thrill of excitement throughout the army. On September 13 I sent McIntosh toward Winchester for the purpose of developing exactly the enemy's position. The two armies were separated by the Opequan and its tributaries. The intervening country was well covered with timber and the accidents of the ground were such as to make concealed and secret approaches practicable. Rushing rapidly by the Winchester Turnpike through a deep gorge crossing the Opequan, McIntosh struck the enemy's outpost near the stream, and so great was his impetus and so unexpected his coming that he captured two officers and thirty-seven men. Without halting, he galloped rapidly through the rising ravine, which screened him on both sides, till he came within two miles and a half of Winchester, where he struck an infantry grand-guard so posted as to cover the approach to the town. His impulse carried him through the enemy's camp, and gave him an entire regiment, which turned out to be the Eighth South Carolina Infantry, with their colonel, fifteen other commissioned officers, and a hundred and twenty-seven enlisted men, and their battle flags, all of which were brought to camp by the middle of the forenoon.[1] The affair not only reflected great credit upon McIntosh but gave us an exact view of the enemy's position, as well as the ground over which our army had to advance in order to engage him.

I met General Grant on September 17 at Sheridan's headquarters, and, after receiving his congratulation on our success, told him that so far as

[1] O. R. Serial No. 90, Sheridan to Grant, p. 24; also McIntosh and Wilson's official reports, pp. 530, 531.

I could see we should no longer delay our advance. With the same advice from others and everything ready he ordered Sheridan to "go in." Accordingly at 2 A. M. on September 19 the general advance was begun from my flank of the army. McIntosh, having been over the ground so recently, naturally had the lead and before daylight was again in contact with the enemy, this time followed closely by the entire division, which debouched upon the plain in front of Winchester. It started at two o'clock and was soon in contact with Ramseur's division, occupying the same position it held when our first advance was made. Without waiting for daylight, I put Pierce's battery of horse artillery, supported by Chapman's brigade, in a position to the right and then ordered McIntosh with his entire force, mounted and dismounted, to rush the enemy's works, which he did in the finest possible manner, breaking through and driving back the enemy all along the line. But Ramseur, a classmate of mine, and an accomplished soldier, quickly recovered from his surprise and in turn led his men against us with firm determination to regain his lost ground and entrenchments. A fierce mêlée of charge and countercharge ensued, in which both sides put forth their best efforts. Every man of the division became sharply engaged and, as every man seemed to know the importance of success, but few orders were necessary. Both brigade commanders fully understood that we had to hold the captured entrenchments, and must continue to hold them till our infantry arrived, and hold them we did. With my staff and escort of Indiana troopers we were in the midst of it, firing and slashing right and

left wherever we could see a rebel soldier. I discharged twelve shots from my revolvers at close range and then, with bugles blowing, drew my saber and charged with the men as best I could.

In the midst of the excitement, before we knew what would be the result, a little waif of a boy, not yet in his teens, and known only as Jimmie, rode up to me, crying as though his heart was broken: "General, give me a squadron. The rebels have captured Billy Brinton [Lieutenant Colonel commanding the Eighteenth Pennsylvania Cavalry] and I want to charge and bring him out." But everybody was engaged and there was no squadron, even for this little paladin to lead. Brinton really was a prisoner, but that night he rolled under a hedge and escaped, rejoining us well up the valley the next day. Meanwhile, we finally drove Ramseur's division from its rifle pits and fence rail "lay-out" and made good our possession. This was the most important performance of the day's operations, for the captured ground and entrenchments were a part of the field which we held till the following infantry could deploy and develop a proper front for the final advance against Early's position in rear.

In the midst of the fighting Colonel Sandy Forsyth of Sheridan's staff rushed upon the field, exclaiming: "This is splendid; you have got a bully fight on hand!" Then, waving his hat, he dashed into the thick of it, but, being an experienced soldier, his enthusiasm soon cooled down, and, recognizing the importance of making good our position, he swung about and, galloping to the rear, called out as he passed me: "What you need here is infantry and I am going to hurry it forward as

rapidly as possible." With this he disappeared, but, withal, it was eight o'clock before the Sixth Corps arrived on the position we had captured.

During this action we lost quite a number, killed and wounded, but captured something like a hundred prisoners. The position we had gained, without the prisoners, was worth far more than it cost. It commanded an extensive plateau overlooking the Opequan valley behind and the fields in front, which, when occupied by our infantry, made it easy for Sheridan to deploy his entire force in such an orderly manner as to give battle with the certainty of success.[1] The rest of the cavalry, which had been watching the country in front of his right flank, now pushed its way across the valley to the Winchester and Shepherdstown turnpike, where it finally took up an important part in the operations of the day.

Upton's brigade of Russell's division was the first infantry on the ground. As soon as it made good its position I moved well round toward the Millwood pike, where I covered the left and front of the army, and held my troops well in hand, ready to advance at the word. Upton had been a cadet with me for four years and was my intimate friend. His service as an artillerist, a colonel of infantry, and a brigade commander had been second to none in the army. He was justly and generally even then regarded as one of the best and most promising officers of his age in the army. His conduct throughout the day was most conspicuous and exemplary, and it has always been my belief that to his action

[1] O. R. Serial No. 90, p. 47, Sheridan's Report; also Wilson's Report, pp. 516 *et seq.*

more than that of any other man the final victory was due. He was the one infantryman who was ever pushing to the front and it was to him, after the death of his division commander, that splendid soldier, General David A. Russell, that the enemy's position and its weakness became fully known. Although badly wounded in the thigh by a fragment of shell, which laid bare the femoral artery, he declined to leave the field, although Sheridan in person ordered him to the rear. Instead of going, he caused his surgeon to stop the bleeding of the wound by a tourniquet, and then threw himself upon a stretcher and had himself carried about the field till the battle was won and the enemy in full retreat.[1] This was the most heroic action that came under my observation during the war. It led, a few weeks later, to my request that Upton, as soon as able to return to duty, should be sent west to command a division and assist me in reorganizing Sherman's cavalry. His prompt acceptance and the splendid service he rendered during the last campaign led to a still closer personal and official intimacy, which lasted to the date of his melancholy death. I shall have many occasions before closing this narrative to refer to his high character and gallant behavior while under my command.

Having gone to Sheridan's left front by nine o'clock, I was constantly engaged throughout the day in making reconnoissances and keeping careful watch over that part of the field, though we had but little actual fighting till late in the afternoon, when we came in contact again with the enemy's

[1] O. R. Serial No. 90, Sheridan to Grant, p. 26; Sheridan's Official Report, pp. 46, 47, 54.

extreme right. Finding it concealed in a piece of woods, I threw McIntosh's brigade forward to dislodge it. With his accustomed spirit, he led his dismounted skirmishers, driving the enemy back and taking possession of his shelter, but in the midst of success his leg was shattered below the knee by a bullet, which compelled him to leave the field. Riding by me to the rear with his leg dangling and his face ashen pale, he briefly reported what had happened in order that I might direct the next in command to take his place. His leg was amputated that night. Chapman's brigade strengthened our attack and assisted in making good our advantage. In turn Chapman himself was knocked from his saddle by a bullet which struck his belt plate and put him *hors de combat* for an hour or two, and finally sent him on leave for twenty days, during which he won and married a charming wife. Such incidents as this make the soldier's life both interesting and romantic.[1]

But with all our earlier success and the advantage it gave us, the battle developed slowly. The enemy held every foot of ground as though he were fighting for right rather than for victory. Fortunately, my position gave me timely notice of every favorable indication, so that when the enemy's line broke and he finally gave way I led my division across country to the Millwood pike, for Kernstown and the Valley turnpike, with the view of intercepting his retreat. The Second New York, under the gallant Hull, so young and boyish that his sprouting blond mustache could hardly be seen, followed closely by the Third New Jersey and the Eighteenth

[1] O. R. Serial No. 90, pp. 25-55, Sheridan's Report.

Pennsylvania, rushed with cheerful alacrity to the work before them. In column of fours the exultant troopers soon found themselves at the edge of an old field opening in front of a cavalry brigade occupying the other side in full line of battle. Without a moment's hesitation, the youthful but veteran Hull called out: "Draw sabers! Front into platoon! Gallop, charge!" And as they emerged from the woods and took the new formation they galloped straight through the enemy, scattering them in all directions like leaves before the wind. It was as prompt and efficient a piece of cavalry work as ever took place, and, as it was helped on by Captain Boice with his newly organized scouts, which struck the enemy at the same time on his right and rear, the rout was complete. It overwhelmed the enemy's last brigade and opened the way to the rear of Early's main line.[1] Hull was closely followed by the other regiments, but, as their route lay through forest and farms, the march, especially for the batteries, was materially delayed by the ravines, stone fences, and rough country of that region. This explains why my division did not strike the retreating rebel army full in flank till after nightfall. But, withal, the pursuit continued till ten o'clock, our troopers repeatedly charging the enemy, scattering his detachments, picking up prisoners, and capturing his impedimenta. Darkness at last made it impossible to distinguish friend from foe. More than one of our detachments charged another. Much confusion and doubt ensued and this prevented the capture of as many prisoners as should have fallen to our lot. As it was, I bivouacked near Kernstown,

[1] O. R. Serial No. 90, Wilson's Report, p. 518 *et seq.*

five miles south of Winchester, at ten o'clock, but it was not till toward midnight that my regiments were all in hand and their whereabouts known.

The battle, while counted a brilliant success, hung in the balance from 8 A. M., when the Sixth Corps began to arrive on the field, till the middle of the afternoon, and this uncertainty was due to the irresolute action of the infantry and especially of the Nineteenth Corps under Emory and the so-called Army of West Virginia under Crook. For reasons never satisfactorily explained, those organizations were slow to reach the field and still slower to develop line and attack the enemy. Upton always claimed that they were not only slow and timid, but badly handled throughout the day.

Sheridan limits his fighting force in that battle to twenty-six thousand men, but whether this is an under- or over-estimate is not important, since the rebel figures given after the war, while habitually understated,[1] still leave it probable that Early had not over half as many in the battle as we had. But, whatever may have been our preponderance of force, and there can be no doubt that it was considerable, both in the battle and in the campaign which followed, Winchester was the first battle of the war in which the cavalry was properly handled in coöperation with the infantry, and in which it played the decisive part. Without reference to the additional trophies it might have won had the infantry acted with as much *élan* and decision as it might have acted, it seems certain that, but for the capture of the entrenchments and the field on which the in-

[1] C. F. Adam's "Studies; Military and Diplomatic," p. 282 *et seq.*

fantry formed its line and from which it advanced, although with much delay, it could not possibly have won the signal victory of that memorable day, and there are many who believe that it might have been driven from the field had Early at any time after eight o'clock assumed a vigorous offensive. The simple fact is that the infantry was slow, and that with all his energy and dash Sheridan was not yet the whirlwind of battle he afterward became.

It is equally certain that the victory, although overwhelming, did not give us as many prisoners or as many spoils of war as it should have done. Had the break come sooner or had the cavalry been kept united and thrown earlier in the day against the enemy's line of retreat, it might have captured Early's entire force.

As soon as light enough to see the next morning, I renewed the pursuit, but without any great additions to our captures. Sheridan had ordered my division to leave the main valley road at Middletown and turn toward Front Royal, but it had not gone far before it struck Wickham's cavalry, which it drove rapidly across the Shenandoah. In the running fight my inspector, Captain Russell of Maine, one of our best and bravest officers, was wounded in the knee by a shot so small that none of us thought it serious, but his leg was amputated that night, which was followed by death in less than forty-eight hours. In these days of antiseptic surgery he would have lost neither his leg nor his life.

At daybreak on September 21 we forced our way across both branches of the Shenandoah and attacked the rebels at Front Royal, but the morning was so foggy that the men in the fighting line could

not see thirty yards. As the lay of the land was unknown, I ordered that every bugler should sound the charge and, when it is remembered that we had two buglers at our headquarters, two at each brigade and regimental headquarters, and two with each battery and troop, and that we had ten regiments in the division, it will be seen that we had about two hundred and fifty buglers all blowing at the same time. As the hills reëchoed the bugle notes and the shouting of the captains, the air was filled with a swelling volume of sound, which might well have frightened a larger force than the one before us. Ten thousand men could not have made a greater noise and as it came from all sides the enemy broke and ran in all directions, but in the gray of the morning and the dense fog but few prisoners were taken.[1] The line of retreat was up the Luray Valley through Massanutten Gap to Newmarket and the pursuit was renewed as soon as it was light enough to see the road. Later the same day Torbert with his division overtook us and held command of the united force till we rejoined the army on September 25.

While pressing the enemy that morning my advance came near plunging headlong into the chasm of Gooney Run, where the enemy had paused long enough to burn the bridge at the foot of a sharp down-grade. The rocky chasm thus left was many feet deep and impassable for any creature except mountain goats. As it extended both ways for a mile or so, it took several hours to find a way of getting our guns and horses across. This annoying circumstance gave the enemy ample time to burn

[1] O. R. Serial No. 90, p. 26, Sheridan to Grant.

other bridges and make fence rail "layouts," which delayed us from rejoining Sheridan in the valley beyond till after the battle of Fisher's Hill.

The day after that, however, we were further reenforced by Lowell's brigade, and pushed up to Staunton, arriving there at 7 P. M. on the 27th. The town, with a large number of convalescent and wounded men, a great quantity of hard-bread, tobacco, military equipments, clothing, and camp equipage, fell into our hands. After taking what we needed and destroying the remainder, we pushed on to Waynesborough, where we spent several hours burning the bridges and tearing up the tracks of the Gordonsville and Staunton Railroad.

We left Sheridan resting at Harrisonburg. With the beautiful country and the fine, bracing weather, all the conditions for continuing the campaign were unusually favorable, but the enemy, by burning the bridges behind him, had made it impossible to overtake him. With but one turnpike in each valley, the minute we left that and took to the country roads we lost, while the enemy gained, both time and distance. As a consequence we did not bring him to bay again till he got beyond the Browntown Gap, through which Torbert concluded it was not prudent to follow him. Sheridan remained far behind, though there is now but little doubt that he might have continued the pursuit till he had driven Early back on Lee, instead of putting that off till six months later.

Perceiving doubtless that our infantry was not at hand, Early turned fiercely upon us late in the afternoon of the 29th between Waynesborough and

Browntown Gap, driving in our pickets and pushing us back so fiercely that we at once concluded his retreat was at an end, or that he had received reenforcements and intended to drive us down the valley if possible. But, while this was dawning on us, Torbert, instead of fighting, gave orders to retire, as he alleged, in compliance with orders from Sheridan, and we were arranging to do so when the enemy appeared in full force. With our batteries in position we opened on his and soon became hotly engaged. Torbert and I met in the turnpike with our officers and escorts and were consulting as to the manner of withdrawing when it became apparent that the enemy had got our range far too closely for comfort. I, therefore, suggested that we had better get out of the road and take position in the open field, but our horses had hardly moved, when flash, whiz, bang! came two shots, raking the turnpike exactly where we had stood facing each other, scattering both officers and men and maiming a lot of horses, but, fortunately, wounding none of us. It was an exciting moment. The thought of danger, the slight movement of Torbert and myself, and the flash of the rebel battery followed each other "in the twinkling of an eye." My servants were getting supper a few yards away when a shot struck the camp fire, scattering pans and skillets and scaring the servants out of their wits. Gathering themselves hastily together, packing up their effects, and tossing them into the mess wagon, they took the road to the rear in a hurry while my colored boy, who had been with me from Vicksburg, rode up, exclaiming: "Gene'l, there ain't going to be no supper, 'case it's all broke up and scattered, an' you'd

better light out and take care of yo'self, for if you get killed, I can't stay in dis wa' nohow!"

Meanwhile Torbert had, as usual, given me the rear, with notice that the other troops would "get back" as rapidly as possible and leave me "a clear road." In retreat this is about the best thing one cavalryman can do for another, and it was most acceptable at this juncture. The enemy's guns were now pouring roundshot and canister from the hills beyond, while his infantry was in full swing toward us, their rifles flashing in the gathering gloom like an innumerable swarm of fireflies. There was not a minute to lose. Hastily sending my aids to the brigade and regimental commanders with orders to withdraw from the outer flanks till only two regiments were left in line, and directing headquarters to take the road without delay, I held on till the movement was well under way. Night was now on. My officers and orderlies were all guiding troops to the rear, but it was now so dark that I could not see whether the last two regiments had gone or were still facing the enemy. There was nothing to do but go in person to find out. I, therefore, gave my horse the spur and had hardly got started when I found myself under a heavy fire, with none of my men in sight. I turned about and rode to the rear at once. Not a soul but the enemy was in sight, and it was then so dark I could not make out clearly what was going on. Hence I took a sharp trot down "the middle of the road," and soon found myself in a deep cut, with the enemy firing sharply at me from both sides. I was in a perilous position, expecting every moment to be killed, but the sunken road saved me by causing the enemy's shots to pass over my

head. I had already drawn my revolver and as I caught the flash of the nearest rifle I fired in return, aiming low and hoping to kill. My speed was fast, and yet I had time before getting clear of the enemy to empty both pistols, and this I did with as much deliberation as I could bring to the task. I always regarded this as the narrowest escape of my life.

I had hardly replaced my pistol and dropped into a leisurely pace when I heard spurs jingling, sabers rattling, and horses' hoofs clattering on the turnpike. Fearing that the enemy had passed around and would finally capture me, I heard with bated breath a hail out of the darkness: "Halt! who comes there?" But, as described elsewhere, I recognized the familiar voice of Captain Hull, who was coming with a squadron of the Second New York Cavalry to rescue me if possible. While the recognition was mutual, I have always regarded this incident as a great tribute to the character and devotion of that splendid young soldier.

We were finally clear of the enemy, but continued our night march through Staunton to Spring Hill, where we halted the next morning at daylight. After resting and feeding we leisurely resumed the march to Harrisonburg, where the campaign ended for the present to the satisfaction of all concerned. But, fortunately for us, Early was not willing to let it rest at that. With blundering fatuity, but unusual daring, he pushed his fortunes to a fatal disaster, for he was overwhelmingly defeated a few days later at the decisive battle at Cedar Creek.

My campaigning in the East had, however, ended at Harrisonburg on September 30 by an order relieving me from further duty with Sheridan and

directing me to proceed without delay to Atlanta, Georgia, and report to General Sherman for the purpose of reorganizing and commanding the cavalry of his military division.

I had led the Third Cavalry Division constantly for nearly six months. It was first to cross the Rapidan and first to engage the enemy in the Wilderness. It was the only division to occupy Spottsylvania Court House. It did its full part in the battle of Yellow Tavern, where Jeb Stuart was defeated and killed. It marched to the James River and then rejoined the army with the cavalry corps at Chesterfield Station, where it made a successful turning movement against Lee's left and rear. It took part in all Grant's operations till he confronted and besieged Lee in his works at Petersburg. From the Chickahominy to Prince George Court House, including the passage of the James, it was the only cavalry division present with the army. From Prince George it moved by the way of Reams Station against the Weldon, the Southside, and the Danville railroads, destroying them so completely that they were out of service for nine weeks. With only four weeks' rest it rejoined Sheridan in the valley, where it took a leading part in the battle of Kearneyville, Winchester, and Waynesborough. During this period it captured many prisoners and participated in twenty-six fights and skirmishes. It marched one thousand three hundred and fifty miles from the 1st of May to the 1st of September, and did its full share of the cavalry work at all times and in all places.[1] And yet the division grew steadily in strength and efficiency. With only three thou-

[1] O. R. Serial No. 90, p. 520, Wilson's Report.

sand six hundred troopers in the saddle, we crossed the Rapidan five months before, and, yet, with all our losses, the division numbered about five thousand men for duty when I left it. Every man was mounted and every non-commissioned officer and private was armed with a Spencer carbine. All things considered, it had become as good a division of cavalry as ever upheld the Union cause. This is shown not only by the extraordinary services I have just outlined, no less than by its splendid deeds under Custer, my gallant successor. Its two best regiments were the Fifth New York and the First Vermont from the opposite sides of the Champlain Valley. They were almost to a man of Anglo-American stock, steady, amenable to discipline, natural cavalrymen, devoted to the Union and without hatred or passion, they were ever ready for the fray. The division contained, besides two other New York regiments, one Connecticut, one New Hampshire, one Ohio, and one Pennsylvania regiment, one troop from Indiana and two regular batteries of horse artillery, all splendid specimens of the American soldier and a complete epitome of the Northern people. By constant work, constant instruction, constant attention to the details of discipline and equipment and by the gradual perfection of their armament they had become, without bravado or bluster, model American cavalry, fully competent to grapple with any military task that might confront them.

On the day I left I was aroused before sunrise by the réveillé, which, as custom required, started with my own buglers and was taken up in turn at brigade and regimental headquarters, and then by troop and battery, till mountain and valley, forest

and field, reëchoed with the strains of martial music. Nothing could have been more stirring than bugle answering bugle on that clear, chilly morning. Borne, at first softly, in upon the awakening sense, gradually swelling as note answered note and finally dying out in the distance with a delicious and lingering concord of sweet sounds, it was an experience never to be forgotten. The regret which I naturally felt at parting with the gallant comrades whom I had come to regard as brothers in the great cause, filled my heart with sympathy and affection which have lasted to this day. Perhaps it was a similar feeling, mingled with grateful ambition, that warmed the heart of my successor and inspired his tongue with pleasant words and generous assurances, ending in an offer to serve with me in the West, and making us better friends than ever before.

After turning the division and its permanent staff over to him, with the brief remark that he knew it as well as I did, I took my leave and started with my aids and an escort of fifty men to Martinsburg, on the way to Washington, for the purpose of completing my arrangements for the great command and responsibilities which had been imposed upon me in the West. While Grant authorized Sheridan to send either Torbert or myself to reorganize and command Sherman's cavalry, both Sheridan and I felt that the great task was really intended for me, and, as Torbert did not care to leave the Army of the Potomac, the detail fell to my lot.

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